

of T H E

Conformists Plea

FOR THE

Nonconformists.

O R,

A Just and Compassionate Representation
OF THE
Present State and Condition
OF THE
NON-CONFORMISTS.

A S T O

- I. The Greatness of their Sufferings.
- II. Hardness of their Case.
- III. Reasonableness and Equity of their Desires and Proposals.
- IV. Qualifications, and Worth of their Persons.
- V. Peaceableness of their Behaviour.
- VI. The Churches Prejudice by their Exclusion, &c.

Humbly submitted to Authority.

*By a Beneficed Minister, and Regular Son of the
Church of England.*

The Second Edition Corrected and Enlarged.

L O N D O N, Printed for Jonathan Robinson, at the Golden
Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1681.

4135. bb. 2.

His Majesty's Speech to both Houses of
Parliament, *Monday, Feb. 10. 1667. pag. 4.*

— One thing more I hold my Self obliged to recommend unto you at this present ; which is, That you would seriously think of some Course to beget a better Union and Composure in the Minds of my Protestant Subjects, in Matters of Religion, whereby they may be induced, not only to submit quietly to the Government, but also chearfully give their Assistance to the support of it.

To the Reader.

in many hundreds of Sermons, diversities of Opinions, either set up by some, or pulled down by others. We heard indeed that some were Independents, others Presbyterians, and others Episcopal, but we heard no such things from Pulpits. I perceive some Men think that the preaching of those Days was meer Fanaticism, blessing the Usurpation, railing against Bishops, or deifying Calvin with an Infallibility; Non ego Lutherum prædico, sed Christum, said Luther. Calvin was an admirable Man, a great Stranger to them that speak most against him; but he was preached no further than Christ spake in him; Non Calvinum sed Christum prædicabant.

4. *If I were partial, I wrong my self by partiality; but I ought to be just, and by being just, I injure no Man. I have heard the Non-conformists vilified, and represented according to the Fancies, and Passions, or Interests of Men. I durst not but be just to them, as to eminent Professors of the Christian Faith, and think that common Christianity hath suffered much by their silencing and disparagement. A great part of the World is made to believe, that the Non-conformists are not fit to be employed in the Church, nor trusted by the State. But what they are God knoweth, and the World may know, if they please to consult their Writings, and to examine their Declaration of their Tenents. They are not, to them that know them, what they are reported by, and to them that know them not. I seldom see any of them, very seldom converse with them, yet I know them sufficiently to make me bewail their Condition, and the vast damage to thousands of Souls, not in the out-skirts alone, but very Heart of England, by their Exclusion and Suppression; who are both able and willing to promote the everlasting Interest of precious Souls, which are committed in the mean while, in many parts of the Land, to them that neither can nor will. If a Husband-man have more Land than he can Till, much of his Land must lie Fallow and yeeld no profit; if a Husband-man have a great Harvest, and discharge his Labourers, he will suffer loss. It is a small Parish indeed that will not find a pretty industrious Man work enough: There is enough for us, and for them to do, if there were the greatest Union of Minds, and wisest distributions, according to each Mans Abilities.*

To the Reader.

5. I have sometimes taken heart to vindicate what may be justified in them, out of a just respect to the Common Faith, and Protestant Religion; and there is no more objected, nor worse things imputed to them by Protestants, than Papists impute to us all: If I have no courage to plead for them, so far as their Cause will bear it, I may prove a Coward in mine own Cause; Every good Man ought to be true to Truth, and the common Christianity.

6. Not to revile nor provoke them that differ from me. If I have described any Persons of an imposing persecuting temper, with any measure of severity: if there be no such Persons, it is a mistake, and no injury; if there be such, Writing is Painting, I have fitted my Colours to the Face, I have not represented any sowness of Countenance, but what I saw upon it. Let us all entertain Peace, and give it place to rule in our Hearts; seek Peace and pursue it, and pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. Farewel.

Mr. Hooker, Preface to Ecclesiastical Polity. There will come a time, when three Words uttered with Charity and Meekness, shall receive a far more blessed Reward, than three thousand Volums written with disdainful sharpness of Wit.

A

To the Bookseller.

Mr. Robinson,

Conceiving it to be a Duty to communicate my Judgment (given privately by Parts, as occasion hath been offered) of the *Non-conformists*, and their Case, and also resolved to conceal my Name, which can add no Reputation to them, nor to these Papers; I have sent them to you, before any other Stranger, (and who but a Stranger may be trusted with the Concealment of one he knows not) for two Reasons. 1. Because, one of your Acquaintance, who (not knowing my Design) gave me a very good Character of you, as Ingenuous, Honest, Candid, a lover of Goodness and good Men, (whether *Conformists* or *Non-conformists*) as well without, as within the way of your Trade. 2. Because it is not hard to guess at the Bookseller by his Author, and the Author by his Bookseller; therefore if you may fall within the Compass of this Observation, you fit me, because you printed the *Conforming Non-conformist*, &c. And another, the *Christian Temper*, which Title was taking with me, (a Temper rare among Christians) which I labour after; and if I have not expressed it in these Sheets, I shall take a little pleasure in them, as the nicest Reader shall in any thing that differs from him. I refer it to you to judge, whether it is like to be profitable or not: for before the publication of Books, your Faculty either are Judges, or find out Judges of them; and the Readers eat, or refuse, only what you have tasted of before-hand. Read and judge deliberately, and let me know e're long of your Approbation, by seeing it abroad; or your dislike, by its suppression. And then I have but one Request, that you would give them a private and a decent Burial, for the Author's sake; who tho he be but a simple Man, yet means well, and for his Master's sake: It shall no more offend me that you stifle, than that if another take the name of them, provided he be *Philagathos*.

To

To the READER.

THe whole Book is to the Reader, yet a short Epistle to him may be necessary.

1. To intreat him to spare his pains in writing against me, who do not begin or maintain a Controversy against him, or against any other; *Pacem te quarimus omnes.* You may perhaps seek to keep it within the unalterable Constitution, and be so much for Peace, that you would have not one Dissenter in the Land. I am against Dissenters also, we agree so far; but I am against Dissenters within doors, that keep Dissenters out; let us make up the Breach as fast and as strong as we can.

2. To inform him, that I do not look upon the Non-conformists as the only Men of God, that I am not hired by them, nor speak for them in hopes of Preferment under the Presbyterian Government, to be set up (as some fear.) I assure him I never fear it, nor hope for it.

3. To make my self known to him, that I am not a Man in Power to shew the Non-conformists favour, nor a Man of Fame to serve them by any Testimonial; but that I laboured to nourish some good Dispositions and Qualities.

1. To adore one and the same Spirit in different Gifts, Administrations, and Degrees.

2. To think more highly of others than of my self, not only as they are in Power, but as in real Worth, tho but at the Footstool.

3. Thankfulness to God; and were it in my power to shew it to every one that ever spake a word in season to me, which many of the Non-conformists have done, when I was ignorant and out of the way, whose Names are in honour with me; and the like I acknowledg, and ever shall, to several that now conform. Time was, when they all spake the same Things, and carried on the same Work; which was the Instruction, Conversion, Consolation, and Edification of Souls; not biting one another, nor grudging at one another. I never heard,

in



*A Just, and Compassionate Representation of the
present Case and Condition of the Non-Con-
formists, &c.*

I Am a Christian, and therefore a Member of the Body ; and as such, am obliged by the Law of Christ, and excited by his Grace, to endeavour the Growth, Perfection, and Unity of that one Body ; and according to the measure of Grace and Life received, *I* cannot but feel the pain of Dislocations, Wounds, Weakness, Excision, Sickness, or Suffering of any Part or Member of it. If I have any Faith or Love, *I* cannot but pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*.

But Ministers above all Christians must have Salt in themselves, and be at peace one with another : they must preach the Gospel themselves, and rejoice that it is preached by others, tho otherwise-minded ; and all Christians must pray that the Word of the Lord may have a free course, and be glorified.

I have some feeling of the broken state of the Church of God in this Kingdom : but, alas ! how little do I feel ? how unfit am *I* to move those that have healing Hands, and store of Ointments, to heal our Wounds ? If *I* could but open the Case of a Church for many years in pain, to be delivered of her Burden, groaning to bring forth Unity and Peace, but cannot : followed long with strong Convulsions, that it is a wonder she hath not died in every Fit ; *I* might move the compassions of her Physicians, to hold a Consultation to expedite her Cure. Many of her Sons have of late bemoan'd her ; and some have made enquiries into the Causes of her Illness ; but their Compassions have done themselves more good than her. She is not at all the better for their trouble for her ; she is as ill at ease as at any time, in a wasting, complaining, declining state. And to say the truth, there are many that make sad Complaints of her Passion, Harshness, and Severity ; They say, that she procured the turning of many of her Ministers out of their Master's service ; that she is not kind to her own Children, but locketh up her Bread from them, or appoints Stewards that do not faithfully dispence unto them, but sell their Bread, and put the Mo-
B
ney

ney in their own pockets. And those Stewards for small Wages hire under-Officers, that feed them but once a day, most commonly with that which costs them but little. And that she is so severe, that all that serve her, must put in Bonds for more than they can pay, and subscribe to impossibilities ; and, in short, they say, she usurps authority over her Husband. They say, they can serve him, but cannot please her ; they can serve him, and die for him, but cannot live in the same House with her.

For my part I will say no ill of her, nor make bate between the Bride and the Bridegroom ; I am honoured to be a friend to him, and indeed I cannot be his friend, and not hers. But this, I'll rather say, that she hath taken some ill courses, and no good courses for her own peace ; she hath been led, and abused by ill Instruments about her, and is indeed changed from what she was in former times, and is not so kind and tender as she was wont to be, by report of many that knew her heretofore. I am exceeding sorry for her. O that I could give her ease ! I am no Physician my self ; but a sorry Messenger may run and call the Doctor, and beseech him, that if he have any bowels or tenderness of heart, he would make haste and apply all his skill to save the Life, and restore the Health of the Mother of many Children, who will fall into the cruel hands of Pope and Devil, so soon as her eyes are closed. O how they long to hear of her Dissolution ! O what a sick and divided House do I live in ! I cannot take rest in my Soul for the Contentions of my dear and loving Master's Wife ; I cannot lie dry in my Bed for the continual dropping : My Pilgrimage and course for these many years, hath been most uncomfortable unto me for the continual dropping in a rainy day. The Contentions are grown notorious, all our neighbours know them. 'Tis a most divided House ! I have no heart to make repetitions, of what I have read and heard to pass between my dear Mother and my dear Brethren ; between my Brethren amongst themselves, and the fellow-Servants. It is a shame that the World should know it ! But it cannot be hid : our very enemies laugh among themselves, and hope to turn us all out of doors, and get possession. They have been disputing, stating of Cases, Petitioning, Pleading, and Appealing to the Judgment-seat ; that my heart akes to think of these things. I have prayed for Peace, and have denied my self, to please my Mother. I will not find fault with her ; my Soul longs for Peace, and if I might prevail, I cannot tell what I would do, on condition that her Servants that have been turned out, may be taken in. But because I cannot see how this will be without an Order of the Justices of Peace, I will humbly represent the Case as truly as I can, and intreat their Order for a speedy settlement of my displaced Brethren. The Complaints are grievous. The Mother complains of the disobedience of her Children, they will not be ruled by her :
she

she would have them to be all of her mind, and uniform. She is a Godly Woman indeed, and keeps Prayers morning and evening in her House; and she is earnest to have them Assent and Consent to all and every thing contained in a certain Book, and use no other. Some of them do not love to be impos'd upon, and think they are of those years, as to know how to pray, and plead a Promise from their Master, of his holy Spirit to assist them, in the discharge of any Imposed Form. (But others can submit to that, if that would do.) She would have them wear white Linen, wide Sleeves, &c. kneel when they eat and drink at the Lord's Table; and will have all their Children baptized, and also crossed in the forehead, which if you would see, is not to be seen, for indeed it vanishes as soon as made. For these things she pleads Authority in her Self, and from her Supreme Governour upon Earth. Since her Marriage with Kings, she is grown wealthy in Estate. The Woman that was sometimes in the Wilderness, drawn before Magistrates, cast into Prison, that was forced to hide her head in Conventicles in those nights of old, that for many Ages spake a hard language, wore a triple Crown, went in gorgeous Apparel, of Ceremonies upon Ceremonies, carried in Pomp, (Princes did kiss her feet) that adorn'd her Walls with Tapistry and Images; grew Imperial in making Laws, and gave her mouth to Cursing and Bitterness.) I say, she now can shew her face, that was sometimes forced to hide it. and is become Reformed and Chaste; but having Lordships and Preferments to bestow, she hath been rather like a Domineering Mistress, then gentle Mother, as some of her Children have complained of her; and hath rather suted her self to the Mode of Earthly Kings, than the Will of her Heavenly King and Husband. It cannot be denied but that some have been ambitious of her Favour, and for the Preferments which they have got by their Ceremoniousness, have done her no good, and to get up above their fellow-servants, have set her above her self. And for ought I see, these ambitious covetous Persons have been evil Instruments of great Contentions and Differences with her Children; and they also having a spice of Adam's nature, and growing stomachful, with their Reason, could not bear a Superiority among Equals, and seeing they were Children of the same Father, knew no other difference than for Prudential Government, a Priority of Order, or the Honour of Seniors; but not a Superiority of Degree and Power.

The more powerful House (for, alas! they have divided Houses) that they may make Laws and govern others, do attribute great Authority to the Church; indeed as great as Jesus Christ her King and Husband had: as if when he ascended into Heaven, he gave among his other Gifts, even all that he had himself, to his Church and Spouse. One R. R. a Writer that

professed so much intimacy with her, as to undertake to give her Sense, and reason of her doings, doth assert her Power and Authority to be twofold; "As all other Bodies Politick, the one of

Preface before his Collection of Canons, &c.

"Jurisdiction to correct and reform, by Spiritual Censures, to preserve the Churches Purity, and

"reduce to Unity the Troublers of the Churches

"Peace, not by Arguments alone, but Spiritual Censures, even to casting

"out of the Church. The other, a Power of Legislation, to make Canons

"and Constitutions. For though our Great Lord (saith he) hath already given to his Church most holy and VVise Rules and Laws for the same

"purposes; yet because they are general, and there may some doubts and

"controversies arise about their meaning, it doth necessarily follow that

"there must be an Authority left to this Church, and Governours there-

"of, to make new Laws upon emergent occasions, to determine particu-

"larities, (where by the way observe, that from a Power to resolve the

Doubts that may arise about the Sence and Meaning of those General

Laws of Christ, he gets ground by stealth, even to infer a Power to

make new Laws) "that there must be a definitive Sentence of Superiours to

"decide Doubts and Controversies. He argues both from the reason of the

"thing, and that Christ gave this Power, *Joh. 20. 21, 22. As my Father sent*

Me; so send I you. And one particular of Jurisdiction there expressed;

"*Whose soever Sins ye bind on Earth, they are bound in Heaven.* The Legisla-

"tive power of making Laws and Constitutions for regulating Manners, and

"determining Controversies, cannot be denied to be granted in that large

"Commission; *As my Father sent me, so send I You, &c.* (Where again

observe how he grows upon us, from a Mission to a Commission. They are

sent indeed, but their Commission is no other than to go, when sent.)

Yea in the next sentence he saith, our Lord commissions his Apostles, (ob-

serve, that pag. 1.) he defines the one Holy Church to be the Society of

Believers to whom that double power was given; but here it is given to

the Apostles: (Have the Society of Believers the same power the Apostles

had? or, doth the Commission given to the Apostles, impower the Society

of Believers to do as they did?) "He commissions the Apostles (saith

"he) with the same necessary standing Power that he had, and exercised as

"a man for the good of the Church: this is a Commission in general for making

"Laws; Then in particular, for making Articles, and Decisions of

"Doctrines controverted, the Power is more express't, *Matth. 28.*

"*All Power is given unto me: Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations;* that is,

"with Authority. And what is it to teach with Authority, but to com-

"mand and oblige all people to receive the Truth so taught? When I

read such Discourses, and such Consequences, I do less wonder that they

who

who are given to strong Delusions, do see those dazzling VVonders; in *Tu es Petrus, & super hanc Petram*; or, that see the two Swords committed to St. Peter, in *Pasce Oves meas*, when he was only appointed to be a careful Shepherd, *Pasce Oves meas*? But some Men are perspicacious, and have Eyes to lead others (that want Eyes of their own) and can see as clearly into a plain Text, as a Priest can into the bottom of a *Papist's* Heart, by his *All-seeing Ear* in Auricular Confession.

Others do build their Towers and Castles upon other Texts, which I pass by.— Thus for the ample power of the Church. The power which Christ hath given to her I revere and acknowledge.

Others go another way to work, and lay the specious Towers and Battlements of *Uniformity* and *Discipline* and *Ceremonies* upon the King's Supremacy; affirming two things: 1. That the Modes required, are things indifferent. 2. That the chief Magistrate may make Constitutions about things indifferent.

And some upon one, and some upon another ground, do raise a great Dust, Contention, and Discontent: some quarrel not, but are of a moderate and peaceable disposition, and wish for Peace and Concord: but these are quarrelled with for their Moderation. And truly it is an ill sign of an aspiring contentious nature, in those that will fall out, with Peacemakers, that are sober and moderate, and wish that both contending sides may understand one another better, and love one another more, and remove the matter of debates and strifes. How are the Ejected called! it grieves my heart to hear them called all to naught: and how are these names returned? And many throw Bones of Contention among them; whisper, and backbite, and carry tales, to foment the heats, which gentle tempers labour to cool.

The other broken Party of the dissatisfied and complaining Family, are not so well agreed as it were to be desired; but they differ more in Accidentals than Substantials from one another, I mean the Brethren whose cause I attempt to open. Some of them will consent to an imposed Form of Prayer, and all to Decency and Order, as necessary in Christian Assemblies; and, in a word, to all is contained in the General Rules and Laws of Christ, and rationally deduced from them, as far as they do understand. They all submit to an Episcopacy of primitive Institution and Limitation, with the due Exercise of Discipline; and they that cannot agree to the same Form of Government, are for maintaining Peace and Love under different Forms, and they yeild enough to have made them Ministers in the Apostles days, and after. They say, 'tis true, that to us there is but one Lawgiver, and that is Christ; and they will teach whatsoever he hath commanded them: They hold that his Laws are sufficient
for

for the Government of the Church; that the Church must be subject to Christ; that her Power, as *Protestant* Writers have maintained, is only Ministerial under Him; that all Power is seated still in Him, and not made over by Him to any other; that the Churches Power is not decisive, (for *ab effectu* they argue, that Controversies have not been decided, by any that have ingrossed the name of th Church) but declarative, and so far binding, as the Reasons are cogent and divine. They acknowledge the King's Supremacy, as it hath been declared by former Learned Writers against the *Romish* Antagonists, and Usurpers of that Sovereign Right: [as by *Nowel* against *Dorman*, *Rainolds* conference with *Hart*, King *James*, and many more.] They assert a Liberty which *Christ* hath given them, and cannot subject themselves, as the servants of men, in the things of God.

They offer to assent to all the Essentials of the Christian Faith, to observe all the Ordinances of *Christ*, and every part of his Worship, and Decency and Order in the Worship of God, as was said before; and, in short, do say, Shew us but what the Apostles Rule was, and we will walk according to it, and, as far as we have attained, be of one mind, and walk according to the same Rule.

But then, they can never yeild to declare an unfeigned Assent and Consent to Laws, Rubricks, and Ceremonies, that are significant of any Grace, or obligatory to any Duty of the Covenant of Grace, or to make Ceremonies federal Signis, tho not Seals; nor the Reading the *Apocrypha*, and Neglecting *Canonical Scripture*, and other things, which divers of them have spoken of at large, and cannot be repeated in this place. They profess, and we may believe them, that they quarrel not because they may not be Lords and Bishops, or that others are so promoted; they declare it is no grief to them, if the Magistrate, or legal Patrons, bestow the Revenues of the Church upon whom they please, and are legally qualified according to the Constitution. They only beg the use of that Liberty of their Consciences; to preach and Worship God according to the Primitive Rule, and Simplicity; and that they may not be Ejected and Excommunicated, and forced to beg their Bread, because they cannot consent to what they cannot believe, nor vow against their Duty.

The danger of giving them a Toleration, while they remain Dissenters, is strongly suggested, from the multiplication of *Papists*, *Socinians*, and *Jews*, as the effect of the Toleration in the *Netherlands*.

But two things may be replied: 1. Widen the Terms, which may be done with safety to the Church, and there will be no need of a Toleration, they will be incorporated with us. 2. There can be no such danger from Christians of the same Faith, and substantial Worship, but of different Accidental Modes, as from *Socinians*, *Papists*, *Jews*, of a contrary

Faith

Faith and Worship. And why we cannot be as kind and liberal to Natives, indulging a Liberty to them in small things, as we are to *French, Dutch, and to Lutherans*, I do not know.

I have represented the Divisions of this most famous Church of Christ, not with the exactness of an Historian, nor of an Arbitrator, or a Moderator, but as best suiting with a Man in haste, and trouble. And, here's enough to move the honest and faithful Justices to arbitrate Differences, and command the Peace. Nothing else will do, nor any other Man so likely to compose the Difference as they. For Prayers innumerable have been made to God; who acts by means in settlements of Peace and Order: therefore we must pray Men too. The different Parties will not agree. The Commissioners * disputed, ** In the Savoy, an. 1662, commissioned by the King.* and both carried the Cause. The Ejected humbly petitioned the Bishops for Peace; they would not hear them. And what Arguing, Preaching, Writing hath

been ever since! Some Reverend Sons of the Church, in love to Peace, and fear of Enemies, have earnestly called and exhorted the Dissenting Ejected Brethren to come and unite, to come into the Present Constitution, as safest, as strongest, as best, &c. But if they could not come in at the Narrow Door, eighteen years ago, and the Door as narrow still as it was then, and there be the same Cross-bars laid across, as were then, to keep them out, to what purpose is the Exhortation? Is there a great Storm a coming? they think that Christ is in the same Ship, and they are as safe as any other. They may clearly plead, they could have conformed at first, upon better worldly terms than now; they might have saved what they have lost, and got their share with others: to come now to conform, when all places are full, and not enow for numerous Expectants, and when there is nothing for them without tedious waiting, and if their Judgements and Consciences could not enter then, how can they now? Unless their Heads have voided all their Reasons, and so are grown less, or that Custom hath made the Entrance smother for them. Learned and Worthy Men have written for and against, and are they gained over to one another? If they are, it is more than they will confess. The one writes *the Mischief of Separation*; the other denies the Charge and Proof; and another throws back the mischief, a Mischief of Impositions: and many Swords are drawn by Seconds, too many bitter words for the Children of the same Heavenly Father, that are called to One, even to the One Hope of their Calling. The one writes, *You are guilty of Schism*: and the other says, *Who made it?* — My Bowels, my Bowels! *O thou the Prince of Peace, make Peace in thine own House, Family and Kingdom*; make of these twain, one Body, and let there be no Schism in it: as they are made One Body, in One, the same Breast-

Breastplate of Faith, in the same Girdle of Truth ; so let them be shod with the Shoes of the Gospel of Preparation of Peace, and let not one hinder another to run, but cause both to walk in the same path, to put on Charity, and to have the same mind that was in thee. —

Methinks it were but fit for us, who weekly petition our good Lord to *deliver us from all uncharitableness, from all false Doctrine, heresie and Schism*, out of a Spirit of Love (if the Peace of God rule in our Hearts) upon our knees to petition our Governours for our Brethrens enlargement, and reunion with us, that they may not lie under the Censures and Reproaches of open Sinners, nor lie under the Imputation of Schism, and other suspicions, and be the subject of Scorn to every *Papistical Scribler*, and many other Mischiefs and Slanders : But there being no hope of that, let every Man do his part for healing of the Breaches. And therefore I cannot but ask my Superiours Pardon to handle a tender point indeed, even to recommend the Case of my Reverend Brethren the *Nonconformists*, to the good Opinion, and charitable thoughts of them that can help with one A& to decide, what a thousand Volumns cannot. I would not, if possible, be misunderstood, I am for Unity and Conformity, but not such an Uniformity as hinders Unity, by turning the Church into a Party. I am not a partial *Hyper-aspistes*, they can best manage their Cause, as best knowing their own mind, neither have they been wanting to it ; Nor shall I give my Mother the Church an unbecoming word ; but yet between the Judicious, Holy and Peaceable part of Fathers and Brethren of it, and the Faction-making Aspiring-party, I cannot but distinguish. Indeed these call themselves [*the Church*,] but by monopolizing the Church, and ingrossing the Goods of the Church if they could ; they have no greater share of the Spirit of the true Catholick Church, than their despised Brethren, commonly called *Schismatics* by them. These are *supra* or *Trans-Conformists*, that keep the Rule of Conformity much as they do their Residence. These Men are *Nonconformists* too, as I could shew in some considerable particulars, and are a *Rubrick* to themselves. But my business is not to accuse them ; but seeing the most are *Non-conformists*, either above or under the Rule, (a Rule, if strictly kept at all times, in all Offices, where were a man's Prudence ? and if a Man hath no Prudence to use, or may not use it, he is very unfit to be a Minister in the Church of God.) I am for the calling of more *Nonconformists* into the Company, and for making *Nonconformists Conformists*.

Our blessed Saviour, in the Parable, compares himself to an Householder going a far Journey, that gave authority to his Servants, and to every Man his work, and commanded the Porter to watch ; and when he went, he left Peace as a Legacy ; *My Peace I leave with you*. But, alas ! how few have fought

fought to get and keep that Legacy, or to do their Work ? We may with Sorrow look into it, and find it, in his Absence, a most broken and divided House. In it we shall find two sorts of Children, all by the same Father, but not as if all of a Mother : The elder and the greater combine, make a mighty Party, and they even rule the Mother. These have the best of every thing, and snatch what the others had, or should have, and part all as they please among themselves, and use their poor Brethren no better than if they were Bastards. These complain, and entreat, and beg : but if they beg, they are not regarded ; if they complain, they are peevish and discontented, deserve nothing, or no better than to be turned out of doors ; if a Man pities them, and pleads for them, he is one of them.— The greater say, These peevish whining Children are disobedient to our Mother, vex her Bowels out, hinder all Government and Uniformity ; if it were not for them, how happy would it be with us ! But who can tell, but the great Ones may fall out among themselves ? The Ejected have written, pleaded their Cause, drawn up their Case, and petitioned, but to what purpose ? To as much as a Man that hath a good Right to a part of an Inheritance, but possessed by an elder Brother, who thinks he can prescribe for all, and plead Possession and Law ; besides that his Friends being Judges in the Court have given it him : This poor younger Brother has but a weak Purse, and few Friends, and what doth he but remonstrate, open his Case to many, and to his elder Brother, with humble Entreaties ; But because he doth not go to Plow, or a begging, or go to some Corners of the Land, or go to some Foreign Plantation, he is rated as a troublesome Fellow, factious, and querulous, and knows not what he would have. Possessors are deaf to Petitioners. He that would recover his Right must go to Law for it, or lose all. except a little Alms, and that as pure Kindness, without pretence of Right or Desert.

There were a Company of Justices that sat long upon the Bench, and these first made an Order for Ministers to come in Bond to certain Duties, or else they discharge the Parishes of them, and turn them out of doors. Many hundreds refused to give in their Bonds, upon which they were turned out of their Houses and Parishes ; and by an after-Order, they were not to come within five Miles of any Corporation, that sent Burgesses to Parliament, or of their own last Abodes ; forbidding them thereby any Employment in Corporations, to get their Livings, or the Charity of their former good Neighbours, if they had any. These and their Families are up and down the Nation, indeed, no better esteemed, which is a shame to tell, than Vagrants, by too many, yea, unfit to live.

Now so far as much as they may be very useful, it would be an Act worthy your place, to move the Honourable Bench of Justices, that never liked

that rigorous Order, in Mercy and Justice to take the Case of these ejected Ministers to consideration, and by another Order to capacitate them to dwell and labour in any City, Town Corporate, Village, and Parish whatsoever any thing in any Law or Statute to the contrary notwithstanding. I make bold to present these following Particulars to you, with Truth and Charity.

1. Their Sufferings.
2. The Hardness of their Case.
3. The Reasonableness and Equity of many of their Desires and Proposals.
4. Qualifications, and worth of their Persons.
5. Their Behaviour.
6. The Conclusion.

I. Their Sufferings. And they admit of various Aggravations, according to their various Circumstances. Some of them were Fellows of Colleges, and not otherwise preferred, in the heat of their Studies; and thereby, together with their Preferments and Livelihoods, lost what could not be recompensed to them, their Opportunities for learned Studies, and their Increase of Abilities, which is an inestimable Loss to any good and studious Man. It was a Trial to ingenuous Men, to be turned out of their Fellowships, (their little Regalities) and become Chaplains or Schoolmasters, for ten or twenty Pound *per Annum*. And there is a difference in a Man's Entertainment, when he is courted and invited into a Family, or Employment, and when his Necessity drives him; and his Entertainment looks more like a Courtesy, than a Reward, with Obligation and Acknowledgement.

Others had but a little Time of Settlement in their Country-Preferments, to lay up any thing for themselves and Families. The more conscientious the Ministers are, the more apt to marry young, chusing rather to cast themselves double upon the Providence of God, than sin in a single Life; honest Marriage being honourable, though attended with honest Poverty. And the most of their Ejectors, being single Persons, and having eaten the Cream of Preferments in their rising Times, had little consideration towards great and small Families. Indeed as many as had treasured up Faith in God, and his Promises, had enough to hold out their Pilgrimage: But if God was so kind, as to give them Faith to live by, they were unkind, that would force them to that noble kind of Life. If God had given them Grace, care should have been taken to find them Work. But God did not cast them out of their Work, nor out of his Care: He became their Patron whom Men ejected, and presented them, some to Places

Places always vacant, dark, and neglected; and others he preferred from Country-Villages, to Towns and Cities. One Instance comes into my Mind, of Mr. *Edward Lawrence*, of *Bace-Church* in *Shropshire*, (a worthy Preacher) turned out with a Wife and many Children, who being asked how he did intend to live, made Answer, *The sixth Chapter of Matthew must maintain me, my Wife and Children, and it is enough for us all*, or words to this effect, (it is many years ago since a worthy Person told me the Story) and so he found it true: And being driven out of the Country by the Rigors of some Men, his double Ejection, the first out of his Parish, the second out of the Country, made way for his Settlement in *London*, whither he was forced. And such reasons as these may be given, why many of the *Non-conformists* resort to *London*, and other Towns, which is imputed to them by some as a Fault of Ambition, or worse.

Others, how far soever grown in Years, and desirous of Rest in the Work of Christ, must out of their quiet Quarters, *colligere Sarcinas*, remove their Beds, and be gone, and sell their Books. And what many of them have suffered since, is not my part to aggravate. God hath taken care of many, and given them Food and Rayment, and Work at their Peril and Cost. And others, besides the Hardships of Imprisonments, Chargeableness of many Removes, have lived by their Industry, by their Labours, even of their hands, a very hard and pinching Life, as I doubt not, is very well known to many of all Qualities, as that many Ministers in the Church are very poor. It is not well taken by some, that they should complain of their Sufferings; and may be not well taken from me, to relate what I know and have heard of particular Persons, to whom with their Children, cast Suits have been acceptable, to cover and adorn them.

I know it is objected, that many live better than ever they did; *get Hundreds per annum, keep Coaches, &c.*

I answer, I do not think there is any *Non-conformists* in the Land, but will quit what they have for what they had, without seeking Considerations for Losses. 2. If some that can graze upon a bare Common, have a little Flesh, and some Wool upon their Backs; others have wasted their Patrimonies, and real Estates. 3. It is their Wisdom to set the best Face on't, to shew they are not discouraged in their Conditions, that they may not appear to beg as they go along, to keep themselves from Contempt, and other prudential Considerations. 4. I wish some had better Feet and Legs, than to be carried in Coaches; I am glad they can keep, hire, or borrow, whatever others are.

Others may object the Sufferings of the Royal Party, and many worthy Divines, into whose places many of the now Ejected violently entered.

Answer. *Mercurius Rusticus* saith enough to make a Man's Heart bleed. I would not diminish those sufferings, by enlarging these; I am sorry for both, for either: But if I may use my Freedom, without offence to any, in this afflicting Point, I humbly offer: 1. It is probable, that many hundreds now Ejected were not Men in those evil Days, therefore not guilty. 2. There was a Provision of a fifth part for the Wives of the Ejected then, there is none for these. 3. Who can answer for the Violences and Injustice of Actions in a Civil War? Those sufferings were in a Time of general Calamity, but these were ejected not only in a time of Peace, but a Time of joy to all the Land, and after an Act of Oblivion, when all pretended to be reconciled, and to be made Friends, and to whose common rejoicing these suffering Ministers had contributed their earnest Prayers, and great Endeavours. Many Ministers in the Church are poor, in poor Livings, in poor Curacies, yet are preferred above or equal to their Merits: many are poor through their Prodigality and superfluous Wigs and Habits. Many Men of Worth are kept low, by reason of Pluralities, and Engrossers, that live at ease, that have not a Heart to labour, nor give the Labourers their Hire. These are Grievances that call for Redress.

It is objected, That they suffer through their own Faults, they suffer for Disobedience to a Law.

Answer. I do earnestly interrogate, Can either those that voted for that Bill, or they who used all Power and Art to procure those Votes to pass it into an Act, say from their Consciences, That it was Conscience towards God that obliged them to it; that if they had not put into the old Conformity, the new Additions, they had sinned against Jesus Christ, and their Faithfulness to him? If they can, then I query, if that be not an erroneous Conscience? And then the Question so often thrown upon the *Non-conformists*, of the Obligation of an erring Conscience, may be retorted upon the Imposers, by indifferent judicious Men. If they cannot say so, then they might put the Question to their own Souls, whether they have not sinned in imposing, or procuring such things to be imposed, as tend to the temporal Hurt and Ruine of many Families, and the great Detriment to the Church of Christ, if not by the Loss of the publick and profitable Labours of many able Ministers, yet by the Divisions that have broken in upon us by these Impositions, and their denying submission to them? It nearly concerns Governors of the Church, to weigh the Necessity of their Impositions, as it doth others to weigh, whether they may act, or refuse to act according to them: For if they rigorously extend their Power beyond the Lines, to the hinderance of the Gospel, they sin against Christ. Caution and Tenderness must therefore be used. If all these things, and every one of them, be necessary to be enjoined

enjoyed and practised, for the Peace, and Union, and Edification of the Church of God; then they condemn their predecessors of Omission of what was necessary, and contradict what they declare concerning some of these things, that they are alterable, and indifferent in themselves, and may be altered. And if ever any Time since their Imposition might require the Change of them, or laying the Ceremonies aside, that Time when they were anew enjoined, and now they are required, might excuse it, for many Reasons that are ready at hand.

Again, some say, It is their Fault that they suffer. But who must be Judges of that? Their own Consciences, or they who censure them? They are as confident it was not their Fault, but their Duty, and roundly write, either they *Of this after-*
that impose, or they that refuse, sin grievously; and plead *wards.*
their Forbearance as no Sin, but a Duty.

O most unhappy Contest and strait! when either Party must grievously sin against God: Certainly our blessed Law-giver Christ never made such a Law, as tends in the execution of it, to the Hurt of any of his Subjects and Ministers, or to stop the Encrease and Progress of the Gospel: And who can justify any particular Law, or Condition of Communion, that is but a Stumbling-block in the way of any, that are past being Babes, and otherwise instructed to his Kingdom?

I conclude with this Observation, That the general Rules of Christ and his Apostles, were given to accommodate the Differences between Jews and Gentiles, to end the Strife, to give ease to the Conscience, silence their uncharitable Censures, and heal their Breaches about things indifferent; and not to determine for one against another, with Penalties. St. *Austin*, was grieved to see the Transgression of a Ceremony to be more severely reprehended, than the Transgression of God's Law, &c. saith Reverend Mr. *John Lloyd*, in his *Treatise of Episcopacy*, pag. 53. But this is not a place to dispute. Can any of the Imposers take the Comfort of their own Impositions, and say, they have Peace and Comfort in the things for which learned and holy Men do suffer? Or if it were to do again, I would dono less? Then all I'll say more is this, Then blessed Act of Uniformity! which brings Comfort to them that made or procured it; and to them that suffer by it also! Comfort from the Cause of other Mens great Sufferings, and the great Loss to Souls, must be rare indeed.

Consider these Sufferings of the Ejected. They suffer really in their outward Estates, in their Freedoms, in their Dangers, (being obnoxious to the Canons, as far as to Excommunication, to the Temporal Laws,) in their Names and Honours, as counted disobedient, seditious, fanatical, are the Objects of Virulence and Dirt, and are represented as intolerable.

These

These are great Sufferings, and a safe way to be redressed, is worthy the Wisdom and Tenderness of Authority. "I am sure, saith the Learned *Dr. Stillingfleet*, it is contrary to the Primitive Practice, and the Moderation then used, to suspend or deprive Men of their Ministerial Functions, for not consenting to Habits, Gestures, and the like. *Iren.* p. 64. *Rule 4.*

Then next let me consider what the Case is; and if it will appear to be a hard Case, it calls for the more speedy and effectual Relief: And this is the next thing I humbly offer to prove.

II. The Case of the ejected Ministers is really a hard Case.

And I will endeavour the Proof of it in two things.

1. Shewing what is required of them.
2. The Penalties for not doing what is required.

1. The things required of them are either,

1. *Ecclesiastical.*
2. *Political*, and mixed with a Case of Conscience, in the two Declarations they are bound by Law to make.

First; The *Ecclesiastical* Part of their Subscriptions and Declarations; (For brevity sake I will pass the old Conformity.) *They are bound to declare their unfeigned Assent and Consent, &c.*

That this is heavy Injunction in it self, though abundance of us have made little of it; for some good Teeth can eat the hardest Crust, but it is Crust for all that. It is hard for any Man,

1. To assent and consent to any thing of another Man's Opinion and Judgment, except first he that gives the Assent have as thoroughly studied, and doth as clearly perceive the things, as he doth that requires the Assent. To assent to some things will not pass in this case, it must be all and every thing. What Parliament-Man will assent to any Bill, except he first be satisfied in the reason of it? &c.

Or, 2. Except he that requires the Assent and Consent, have a degree of Infallibility, or be endowed with an absolute uncontrollable Power, against whom no Scruple, no Objection, or Debate, can or ought to be made.

3. Would not every Practitioner in Physick think it hard, that he must subscribe Assent and Consent to all and every thing contained in, and prescribed

prescribed by the *London Dispensatory*, and use no other? Would not the Judges in the Courts at *Westminster*, think it hard to declare their Assent and Consent to all and every thing in the Statutes and Laws of *England*, and not endeavour any Alteration? And why is it not hard for us, to subscribe to all and every thing contained in a Book of Divine Worship, not composed by a Divine infallible Spirit? Can more be required to the Scriptures, or clearest Point of Doctrine or Faith?

4. It is hard, as appears by the Qualifications and Mitigations of the Sence of the Declaration. If the Words were clear, and easie for the Understanding and Will to digest, there needed no soft Construtions to help them down. It cost all, that are careful what pass their hands, some thoughts to make them easie. And had it not been for that one word, *Use*, and the help of that, it would have stuck with many, that are as great Pillars of the Church as any in it, in their stations and degrees. That which is easie and plain, will easily pass with an ordinary Understanding. The various Construtions of the Forms are impartially given by the Reverend Mr. *Baxter*, I shall nor run out to defend either the rigorous or milder

*Nonconformists
Plea for Peace,
p. 158, &c.*

Construtions, but shew that the Case of Dissenters is hard, and indeed of all Conformists, that must take the Words without *Salvo's*, or else must fall under the Censure of Hypocrisie, and doing more Hurt by conforming, than if they had not conformed. It is hard to lay the Stress of many Parts of a Declaration, as fully and distinctly express'd, as the Wit of severe Men could word them, upon one general word, *Use*. It is a hard Constrution of affirmative Propositions, or Parts of a positive Declaration, to be explained in a privative or negative Sence; yet so we find them smoothed, and rolled up in Liquorish, that they may pass the narrowest Throats. I shall take the Pains to transcribe two Construtions, of two Excellent Men, which may be taken next to a publick Sence and Constrution, especially the one of them, who was the most learned and rarely tempered, Bishop *Reynolds*, in his Sermon of Moderation before the House of Peers, *Novemb. 7. 1666.* a Day of Solemn Humiliation for the Pestilence, pag. 24. 'And truly it is an Honour which Learned Men owe to one another, to allow Liberty of Dissent in Matters of meer Opinion, *salva compage Fidei, salvo vinculo Charitatis, salva Pace Ecclesiae*, (for these three, Faith, Love, and Peace, are still to be preserved;) 'so it is a Charity which good Men owe to one another upon the same *Salvo's*, to bear with the Infirmities of each other, not to judg, or despise, or set at naught our Brethren; as useles and inconsiderable Persons: 'But whom God is pleased to receive into his Favour, not to cast them out of ours. This Latitude, and Moderation of Judgment, some learn'd

Men

Men have taken the freedom to extend, even to the Case of Subscriptions by Law required. The learned Author of the Book called, *An answer to Charity maintained*; and the late learned Primate of Armagh, Arch-Bishop Bramhall; (and quotes their Words in the Margent, which are these) For the Church of England, I am persuaded, that the constant Doctrine of it is so pure and Orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, undoubtedly shall be saved; and that there is no Error in it, which may necessitate or warrant any Man to disturb the Peace, or renounce the Communion. This in mine Opinion is all intended by Subscription. — The Words of the Arch-Bishop are these; We do not suffer any Man to reject the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England at his Pleasure, yet neither do we look upon them as Essentials of saving Faith, or Legacies of Christ and his Apostles; but in a mean, as pious Opinions, fitted for the Preservation of Unity; Neither do we believe any Man to believe them, but only not to contradict them.

This Sermon being printed upon request of the Lords, I thought this moderate Exposition of Subscription, (as it was aimed at by that rare Preacher, I believe) might pass for approved by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and be next to a legal authentick Sence of all things required by Law: For if Subscription of Articles be in so laxe a Sence, much more to some of the other things. But Mr. Baxter, who hath as good reason to know as any one Man, hath dashed this Conceit; for he writes, that when the Lords would have put in this Proviso, *To the Use of the Book*, the House of Commons refused it, and the Lords acquiesced in their Reasons given in at a Conference about it. *Ubi supra*, p. 160.

The other Expositor of our Declaration, which I shall produce, is the Reverend Dr. Stillingfleet, Dean of St. Paul's, who shines as a Star in our Firmament, and in regard of his own great Reason, and Acquaintance with other great Mens thoughts, may direct the Course of fluctuating Coasters, that look for a safe Landing-Place, and sure footing, before they proceed in the Service of the Church. In his late controverted Sermon, among other sharp Reflections upon his Separation. Friend, Mr. Baxter, he hath these words, pag. 49. *It is a hard Case with a Church, when Men shall set their Wits to strain every thing to the worst Sence, to stretch Laws beyond the Intention and Design of them, to gather together all the doubtful and obscure Passages in Calendars, Translations, &c. And will not distinguish betwixt the Approbation of the Use, and of the Choice of things; for upon such Terms as these Men think to justify the present Divisions. I much question, whether if they proceed in such a manner they can hold Communion with any Church in the Christian World.* So far he. From which Words I make bold to infer, (and if I am

am too bold, I do seriously ask his pardon.) 1. It seems to me that he limits the fence of the Declaration of *Assent* and *Consent*, to the scope and intention of the Law, which is *to the use* of the Book, and all things in it. 2. That a man may assent and consent *to the use* of those things, which a Man would not, or doth not *choose*, if left to his choice and liberty. 3. Here is a blot cast by his Elegant Pen, at least upon some of the things, contained in, and prescribed by the Book, as things not to be chosen, but only to be used by constraint. 4. An Impeachment against the Contrivers and Exacters of Conformity, for requiring Assent and Consent *to all and every thing* (not making a difference 'contained in, &c. which such Excellent Men as the Dean is would not use, if left to his choice, nor any other wise man choose; and so their meaning comes to this: I will use this Book, (and all things to be used in it) such as they are, instead of better; and tho not declaring our Assent, is punishable with Deprivation, or Non-Admittance into the Publick Ministry of the Church, and the loss of a Man's Livelihood, and Temporal Rewards of the ministry. 5. If our Governours shall from their great Wisdom and Compassion to a most divided Church, alter the terms of Communion and Conformity, and unlace the Garment which is made too strait for the Body, which faints, being straitly laced: then no man must be offended with the Reverend Dean, or any other that conformed in this large fence, if they disuse the things now in use, and fall in with such things as may like them as well or better. 6. I infer, and retort (which is to my purpose) that it is a hard Case with a Church, when Men shall strain their Wits to frame Declarations, under such severe Penalties, to passages that are doubtful and obscure, and capable of an ill fence, that we must turn to Kalendars to find out Lessons in the *Apocrypha*, that have Canonical Lessons enow, to use other Translations than the last and best, &c. But Mr. Baxter doth instance in other things, as well as *Kalendars and Translations*, and holds occasional Communion with the Church as it is, and would much rather, if those passages, (which the learned Dean calls *doubtful and obscure*) were not imposed, and is Catholick enough to hold Communion with any Christian Church, that hath not corrupted the Essentials of Christian Worship.

The second Declaration and Subscription contains Matter Political and mixed, which is, *Not to take up Arms, &c.* a thing easily consented to. I do confess that there have been fair Explications and Limitations published to make this gain Assent: but yet it is hard, unless all men could attain to the same fence, and those Explications are not known to abundance that subscribe and declare, and so promise and swear in the dark: I am confident many never read the Covenant that renounce it, and so renounce they know not what; and may take their Informations from the

Pulpit, where a Thread-bare Jingle hath been of late much used by some of the Holy-League in *France* (to root out the Protestants) and the Solemn League, which must be taken to be as bad as that, being coupled together with it. But that which is hard in these things is, 1. To renounce what many do not know, (and most never took) nor was ever like to be imposed, but to expire with the Men that took it, in the heat of War: [But the Time of the Expiration of this Part draws on.] 2. Not only renounce it our selves, but to declare that no Man else is bound. How can I judge of another Man's Obligation in his *Place and Calling*, &c. Besides, admit I declare that there lies no Obligation upon any other Man, any more than upon my self, yet it is but my Opinion: I think he is not obliged, but my Opinion doth not absolve or release him that thinks himself obliged, and all this while I do really renounce but for my self. And it is hard for any Man to determine a Case of Conscience, whose Case he doth, it may be, not well understand, and may fail in the stating of it.

But I must not descend into Particulars, neither do I determine against it, but only transiently shew the Excusableness of them who cannot declare these things, (altho they do not refuse it from any Principle of Disloyalty or Faction) and that from this undeniable Consideration and Argument: That which all the Art, and Wit, and Interest of some Men in great Place and Power in the House of Lords, could not make to pass, but was opposed with that Clearness, and Cogency of Reason and Resolution, as if they were saving a Nation, by resisting the Test, which could not pass into a Bill, must needs be hard to be imposed upon Ministers. And it is not improbable, but that noble Opposition gave the greatest Repulse to a dangerous Design, long carried on to subvert the Government, under a Pretence to preserve it as it is, in all its Parts and Circumstances. And the joint Opposition of some Popish Lords against the Test, doth not at all abate the Strength of this Reason; for they having a cruel Design, destructive of this Frame, could not chuse but oppose a Test, which was pretended to preserve it unalterably as it is, both in respect of the Persons that govern in the Throne, Church and State, and in its present Constitution. And whereas many things have been carried on, as tho to prevent the coming of such a Year as that unhappy *Forty one*; yet really there have been great Endeavours used, to bring us under the Obligation which some brought upon us in the Year *Forty*; I mean the *Et cetera* Oath, leaving out the *Et cetera* it self, and under a colour to preserve us from a Long Parliament of the Complexion of *Forty one*, Protestation, and Covenant, and War, gave Umbrage to a fearful Plot, to bring us under a Papal Slavery, introduced by bloody Massacres. And who talk'd more of *Forty one*, than some that are of late discovered to be Traitors; and having professed to be

Sons of our Church, committed Fornication with Rome, who had almost gone out her full Time, ready to be delivered of a Pope, and had called the *Midwife* and many Ladies to the Labour, bespoken Nurses and Gossips, and Choice of Fathers, to *Antichristen* the Monster with the Name of Catholick Church, with all the Ceremonies of the Mass? Some of the eminent *Nonconformists* being willing to declare their detestation of Disloyalty, were taken with the Declaration sent out after the *Oxford Oath*, or *Five-mile Act*, being made believe that that Explication was sent forth by good Authority; yet many smelling what was intended, were resolved to venture their own private loss of Liberty, by asserting the Publick Liberty, and (as things now appear) the Government owes them a kindness; and the Noble Lords and Commons (that understood themselves, and the encreasing Perils) immortal thanks for their seasonable Activity to preserve the strong and ancient Government. But, to conclude this Head, It is not kind to say no worse; to engage all Ministers, never so young, or else they cannot enter into the Churches Ministry, either to be Politicians, to study State-Affairs, (for which many have been extreamly blamed) or else to be led as Fools, into they know not what. And they that have given this further Test of their Loyalty, have little cause to take it well; as if the standing Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy were not sufficient to keep us honest, but dishonour us by a suspicion of Disloyalty and Treachery. Observe the method of proceeding; first they began with us, as Guides of the People; and next proceeded to draw in Corporations, and from thence to impose it upon the Parliament it self; to which if they had submitted, we see what would have followed, We might have seen such Commissioned by the King's own Authority, as would have destroyed His Person, and cut all our Throats, having first tied our hands. Thus I have shewed what is required from them. The second Particular follows.

II. Consider the Penalties to be inflicted upon such as will not conform.

1. They who were in the Ministry must be divorced from those, whom they had baptized, and espoused to Christ, among whom they had laboured, and their remove was to the shaking of many Christians, and to the great harm of the Church. I will instance only these three ways. First, it was as bad to many, as the change of a Nurse to a weakly Child. (I will ask no Pardon for the Comparison, it being Apostolical.) It was enough to make many stagger, and call in question all those Truths that had bin delivered to them, since that their Preachers are judged unfit to be continued in Trust with Souls, and tended to breed much Atheism, and ma-

ny Errors. Thirdly, It tended to alienate the minds of many from the Government of the Church, that would enforce Laws binding to many unnecessary things, even to the Ejection and Deprivation of many Orthodox and painful Divines. And this sticks with many to this day; by which the Church-Rulers have not got, but lost. And these things aggravated with an imputation of Dishonesty in Ministers, by the publication of their Assent, &c. in the full Congregation. For if any had distinguished between the substance of Ordinances, and Accidentals, which was but necessary to many people, (who thought no worship Divine without the Common-Prayer, (as I my self have known) nor
See also Mr. Blake, Comenian sealed. p. 308 any Child rightly baptized without the Cross) yet by this Act of Uniformity they must declare Assent and Consent to all and every thing to Cross as well as Baptism, to Ceremony as well as Substance. And how easie was it for sinful People and weak, to say, See what these Men can do — Yea, in case that in any after-time, wise and moderate Governours should see a necessity of making alterations: Then again, teaching Scorners to say, Yea, see what these Men can do — to the great dishonour of Religion, and disgrace of the best of Ministers. And one would think that because the Courts continue to swear Church-Wardens to present, they had Spies enow upon our *Nonconformity*, and Punishment smart enough, they might have spared to require this Declaration; or, if they had thought us honest, our promise to conform had been sufficient, tho kept in the Registers, and made at our Institutions. Yet through this Dishonour we attain our Honour. They are debarred from all exercise of their Ministerial Abilities, their Wives and Children turned out of Doors; and when they had made a sad and chargeable Remove of late, must remove again upon the Five-mile Act. And these Penalties were next to Death, and I conceive proved the Death of many. I remember the Renowned Bishop *Morton* wrote these words to the *Nonconformists*, and desired them earnestly to consider the Censure of the Apostle's *W* being so dreadful: "I ought not to
 "esteem any thing a just Cause, why I should wilfully incur the Censure of
 "Silencing my self from Preaching, for which I ought
The General Defence. "not as willingly to adventure my Life. The *Non-*
of the three Ceremo- "conformists have suffered what is next to Death, and
mies. Part. 1. p. 163. "too many have suffered even unto Death, in Prisons
 "where several caught their Death, and others died:
 "(it is a dreadful story) of whom shall their Deaths be required? And it
 is easie to retort those words of the Reverend Bishop, "Imposers should
 "not esteem any thing a just cause of bringing any under the censures of
 "Silencing of Preachers from preaching, for which they may not adven-
 "ture to take away their Lives. It

It is objected, *That they sin against the Law.* And they may answer, *Who procured the Law?* it is the Magistrate's Sword but who moved him to draw it? They are told they have no cause to complain of sufferings; for the Magistrate hath been merciful, and hath not executed the Laws.

Thanks be to God for the Mercy: but all have not been so merciful as the King hath been, or many inferiour Magistrates; but their Mercy hath not been kindly taken by many, who should have more tender Bowels than any Man that wears a Sword. To conclude; a reasonable understanding may judge that Law not fit to remain in force, that is not fit to be put in execution. That Law cannot be good, that is not fit to be brought to act, without more real hurt than good. And if the wise and merciful God hath by many remarkable Providences put a stop to their execution, it is time for Men to annul the Law.

2. The Penalty is hard upon them that make their offers to be admitted into the Churches Service, or that would come in but for these Injunctions. It is but a narrow Passage that is made for them that enter in: yet what shall they do who have spent all they have in a Preparatory Education? In they must, tho but to a Curacy, (which is not easie to be had.) It is grievous to think with what Implicit Faith they do what is to be done; yet must Assent to more than ever many have studied, [rather following Example than Reason] or else there is nothing for them to do. Others that are inclin'd to Learning, and to serve in the Gospel, are deterred upon many accounts, and have great prejudices against Conformity, because of the great reverence they have to *Nonconformists*; and these are under a great temptation to perpetuate a Nonconformity: which is more sutable to their inclinations, as being a state of freedom to their Consciences, from great Bonds and Obligations, tho an Estate attended with hazard to their Bodies and Estates. And all young Students are under this necessity, either they must subscribe hand over-head, or else they must spend their time in these endless Controversies of the Church, and be engaged in the doleful and fearful Wars of the Church, on one side or other.

3. The third Consideration that pleads for our *Non-conforming Brethren*, is taken from the Reasonableness of their Demands. I distinguish these Demands, into those Proposals made by the Commissioners in the *Savoy*, Anno 1662. with that Modesty, Gravity, Humility and Reason, treating the Bishops and other Commissioners as Superiours. 2. Into those which have been repeated by particular Persons, and may be seen in the Writings of Laborious and Catholick Mr. Baxter, Mr. John Corbet, and Dr. Owen in his learned and moderate book of Church-Peace, Love and Unity. I shall only generally compare what they humbly desired, with what was declared.

1. In his Majesties gracious Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs: a most large and healing Plaister for the Churches Wounds; and might have been a Pillar to have born up the Church in Unity, as his Gracious Act of *Indemnity and Oblivion* hath held up the State; if some Men, who can be loyal for their own ends, had not (perhaps) bin industrious to make Divisions by their Affected Terms of Union.

2. They humbly moved, but for what great Men, and famous in the Church of God to all posterity thought fit to grant. In that Year 1641, there was a Committee for Religion appointed in the House of Lords, ten Earls, ten Bishops, ten Barons. The Bishop of *Lincoln (Williams)* sent a Letter to some Divines to attend that Service (who met *Breviat* of his in his House, the Deanery of *Westminster*) upon which *Life*. p. 24. Arch-Bishop *Laud* hath this Note: "Upon the whole matter, I believe this Committee will prove the National Synod of *England*, to the great dishonour of the Church: and what else may follow upon it God knows.

These Divines were no less Men, than the most Venerable Arch-Bishop *Usher*, Bishop (*Williams*) of *Lincoln*, Dr. *Prideaux* (after Bishop of *Worcester*) Dr. *Brownrig* (after Bishop of *Exeter*) Dr. *Ward* (Professor of Divinity in *Cambridge*, and Arch Deacon of *Taunton*) Dr. *Featly*, Dr. *Hacket*, of late Bishop of *Coventry* and *Litchfield*. All these subscribed a Paper called, *The Proceedings, &c. touching Innovations in Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England; together with Considerations upon the Common-Prayer Book*. Out of which I draw a Parallel, with the Proposals of the Divines appointed to treat by his Majesty's Commission, with the Archbishop and Bishops, and other Divines of the Church of *England*, at the *Savoy*. [See Account of the Proceedings, printed *Lond.* 1661.]

The Divines appointed to meet in the
Dean's House, 1641.

Considerations on the Common-
Prayer.

2. Whether the Reading of
Psalms, Sentences of Scripture, con-
curring in divers places in Hymns, the
Epistles and *Gospels*, should not
be set out in the New Translation.

4. Whether Lessons of Canonical
Scripture should not be put in the
Calendar instead of the *Apocrypha*?

5. That

The Commissioners in the Savoy,

1661.

In regard of the many defects
which have been observed in that
Version of the Scriptures which is
used throughout the Liturgy, We
therefore desire in stead thereof the
New Translation allowed by Au-
thority, may alone be used, 8 p. 31
It is therefore desired that no-
thing may be read in the Church for
Lessons but the Holy Scriptures of
the Old and New Testament.

Excep-

5. that the *Doxology* should be always printed at the end of the Lord's Prayer.

6. Whether the *Rubrick* should not be mended, where it is, (that the Lessons should be sung in a plain Tune) why not, read with a distinct Voice?

7. Whether *Gloria Patri* should be repeated at the end of every *Psalm*?

Consider. 9. Whether the *Hymns, Benedicite, Omnia Opera, &c.* may not be left out?

10. Whether the *Rubrick* should not be mended, where all Vestments in time of Divine Service, are now commanded, which were used 2 E. 6.

11. In the Prayer for the Clergy that phrase perhaps to be altered, [which only worketh great marvels.]

12. In the *Rubrick* for the Administration of the Lords Supper. Whether this Alteration to be made, that such as intend to communicate, shall signify their Names to the Curate over Night, or in the Morning before Prayers.

13. The next *Rubrick* to be cleared. How far a Minister may repulse a scandalous and notorious Sinner from the Communion.

14. Whether

Exception 3. We desire that the words, *For thine is the Kingdom* may be always added to the Lord's Prayer.

Except. p. 13. The Lessons, and Epistles, and Gospels, being for the most part neither *Psalms* nor *Hymns* we know no Warrant why they should be sung in any place; and conceive that the distinct reading of them with an audible Voice, tends more to the edification of the Church.

Except. We desire it may be used but once in the Morning, and once in the Evening.

Except. We desire that some *Psalm* or *Scripture-hymn*, may be appointed instead of that *Apocryphal*.

Except. We desire it may be left out.

The Prefaces of many *Collects* seem not to have any clear and special respect to the Petitions, &c. Partic. p. 7.

In the Order for the Lord's Supper.

Except. The time here assigned (in the *Rubrick*) for notice to be given to the Minister is not sufficient.

Except. We desire the Ministers power, both to admit and repulse from the Lord's Table, may be, according to his Majesty's Declaration, *Octob. 25. 1660.*

Except.

13. Whether that *Rubrick* is not to be mended, where the Church-wardens are straitly appointed to gather the Alms for the Poor, before the Communion begins, for by experience it is proved to be done better when the people depart.

14. Whether the *Rubrick* is not to be mended, concerning the party that is to make his general Confession upon his Knees, before the Communion, that it should be said only by the Minister, and then at every clause repeated to the people.

16. Whether it be not fit to insert a *Rubrick* touching kneeling at the Communion; that is, to comply in all humility with the Prayer which the Minister makes when he delivers the Elements.

19. Whether in the first Prayer at the Baptism, these words, *Didst sanctifie the Flood Jordan, and all other Waters*, should not be thus changed; *Didst sanctifie the Element of Water?*

20. Whether it be not fit to have some discrete *Rubrick* made to take away all Scandal from signifying the Sign of the Cross upon the Infants after Baptism, or if it shall seem more expedient, to be quite disused; whether this Reason should be published, that in Ancient Liturgies, *No Cross* was consigned upon the party, but where Oil also was used; and therefore Oil being now omitted, so may also that which was concomitant with it, the Sign of the Cross.

Except. Collections for the Poor may be better made at, or a little before the departure of the Communicants.

We desire it may be made by the Minister only.

We desire that the following *Rubrick* in the *Common-Prayer Book* of 5. of *Edw. 6.* may be restored, for the Vindication of the Church, in the matter of kneeling at the Sacrament, &c.

It being doubtful whether either the Flood *Jordan*, or any other Waters, were sanctified to a Sacramental use by our Saviour's being baptized:— VVe desire this may be otherwise expressed.

18. *General Proposal.* After strong arguing, they conclude, VVe therefore most earnestly entreat the right reverend Fathers and Brethren, to whom these *Papers* are delivered, as they tender the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion, the Peace of the Church, the Service of his Majesty, in the accomplishment of that happy Union, which his Majesty hath so abundantly testified his Desires of, to join with us in importuning his most Excellent Majesty, that his most gracious Indulgence, as

21. In private Baptism, the *Rubrick* mentions that which must not be done, That *the Minister may dip the Child in Water, being at the point of Death.*

22. Whether in the last *Rubrick* of Confirmation those words be to be left out, [*and be undoubtedly saved.*]

23. Whether the Catechism may not receive a little more enlargement.

to the fourth Commandment, that those words be omitted. Answer, thus given, Two only, *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*, &c. A more full Explication of the *Creed*, *Lords Prayer*, and *Ten Commandments*, &c.

to these Ceremonies granted in his Royal Declaration, may be continued and confirmed to us and our Posterities, and extended to such as do not yet enjoy the Benefit thereof.--

Of Private Baptism.

We desire that Baptism may not be in a private place at any time, unless by a lawful Minister, and in the presence of a competent number; and where it is evident that any Child hath been so baptized, no part of the Administration may be reiterated in publick under any limitations, and therefore we do not see any need of any Liturgy in that Case,

Exception of Confirmation.

Altho we charitably suppose the meaning of these words was only to exclude the necessity of any other Sacraments to baptized Infants; yet these words are dangerous, as to the misleading of the Vulgar, and therefore we desire they may be expunged.

Except. of the Catechism.

We desire the first Question may be altered, considering for 20 Years past, many had no God-fathers; and the 7th Q. The second Answer. Wherein I was visibly admitted into the number of the Members of Christ. That the Commandments may be inserted according to the last Translation of the Bible. That in the Exposition of the Commandments, some clause may be inserted to refer

24. Whether the Times prohibited for Marriage are quite to be taken away?

25. Whether none hereafter shall have Licenses to Marry, nor be asked their Banns of Matrimony, that shall not bring with them a Certificate from their Ministers, that they are instructed in their Catechism?

26. Whether these words in Matrimony [*with my Body I thee worship*] shall not be thus altered, *I give thee power over my body*?

27. Whether the last Rubrick of Marriage should not be mended, that the new married Persons should receive the Communion the same day of the Marriage, may it not well be, or upon the next Sunday following, when the Communion is celebrated?

28. In the Absolution of the Sick, were it not plain, to say, *I pronounce thee Absolved*?

29. The Psalm of Thanksgiving of Women after Child-birth, Were it not fit to be composed out of proper Versicles taken from divers Psalms?

Except of the Form of Marriage.

The word *Worship*, being much altered in the use of it, since this Form was drawn up, we desire some word may be used instead of it.

This Rubrick doth either enforce all to forbear Marriage as are unfit for the Sacrament, or the unprepared to come to the Sacrament. And therefore we desire it may be omitted, the rather because that Marriage Festivals are too often accompanied with such divertisements, as are unsuitable to those Christian Duties which ought to be before, and follow after the receiving of that Holy Sacrament.

Except. Visitation of the Sick.

That form of Absolution be declarative and conditional, as [*I pronounce thee Absolved*] instead of [*I absolve thee*] if thou dost truly repent and believe.

This Psalm (121) seems not to be so pertinent as some other, viz. Psal. 113. & Psal. 128. —

32. In the Order of the Burial of all Persons 'tis said, *We commit this Body to the Ground, in sure and certain hope of Resurrection to eternal Life*: Why not thus, Knowing assuredly that the Dead shall rise again?

34. In the Litany, instead of *Fornication, and all other deadly Sin*; Would it not satisfy thus, *From Fornication, and all other grievous Sins*?

35. It is very fit that the Imperfections of the Meeter, in the Singing *Psalms* should be mended; and then lawful Authority added unto them, to have them publicly sung before and after Sermons, and sometimes instead of the Hymns of Morning and Evening Prayer.

Except. Burial of the Dead.
These words cannot in truth be said of Persons living and dying in open and notorious Sins.

Except. in the Litany.
In regard that the Wages of Sin is Death; We desire that this clause may be thus altered, *From Fornication, and all other hainous or grievous Sins.*

Gen. Proposition, 12.p.6.
Because singing of *Psalms* is a considerable part of publick Worship, We desire that the Version set forth and allowed to be sung in Churches, may be amended, or that we may have leave to make use of a purer Version.

I shall not draw the Parallel any further, but infer these following Observations.

1. That those great and famous Men did see some necessity or reason for altering of many things in the Liturgy; and therefore the Presbyterian Divines, (most of whom were and are *Non-Conformists*) were not altogether captious and quarrellous, that maintain'd a Necessity of Reformation. On the other side, there were learned Men who maintained there was no necessity of Reformation: But you see, against the sense of those admirable Divines that met in the Dean's House, 1641.

2. I observe, That the Proposals and Exceptions of the Commissioners in the *Savoy*, were not without great President; and insisted upon many things, which the most eminent Fathers of the Church of *England* would have yielded to them, and doubtless much more, if not all, for Peace and Union.

3. To speak a word for the reproached Brethren of the *Non-conformists*, (who are represented to have all the ill Humours of factious Persons, and discontented, that know not what to ask, nor what they would have) is but a piece of Justice and Christian Charity. Men think nothing but Presbytery, and Covenants, and Directory, will please them; which is not just

nor true. They desired that the Liturgy may consist of nothing doubtful or questioned amongst pious, Orthodox, Learned Men &c. Dr. *Allen* of *Huntingdon-shire* and Clerk in the Convocation, did earnestly labour with the then Bishop of *London*, (afterward Arch-Bishop) that they might so refine the Liturgy, that no sober Man might make Exception. He was wished to forbear, for what should be, was concluded on or resolved. They desired, the observation of *saints Days* might be omitted, &c. The most Reverend *Usher*, and the rest, begin their Considerations with this; *Whether the Names of some departed Saints, and others, should not be quite expunged the Kalendar?* They desired that there might be no such Imposition of the Liturgy, as that the Exercise of the Gift of Prayer be thereby totally excluded in any part of publick Worship. The most excellent *Usher*, (p. 5. § 16.) and the rest, reckon it among the Innovations; 'By prohibiting a direct Prayer before Sermon, and bidding of Prayer, (which is now the mode all over the Bishoprick of *Duresm*, as some that are no strangers in it say.)

They at the *Savoy* stood for a Reformation and were not singular therein; for without it, the Reverend Dr. *Featly*, (a worthy Man, and great Sufferer in our unhappy Warrs, which is like the Sword that makes no difference) printed this Challenge and Manifesto.

1. 'The Articles of Religion need no Alteration at all, but only an Orthodox Explication in some ambiguous Phrases, and a vindication against false Aspersions.

2. 'That the Government by Bishops (*removing all Innovations and Abuses in the execution thereof*) is agreeable to God's Word, and a truly Ancient, and Apostolical Institution.

3. 'That the Book of *Common Prayer* (*N. B. the Kalendar being reformed, in point of Apocryphal Saints and Chapters; some Rubricks explained and some Expressions revised, and the whole correctly printed, with all the Psalms, Chapters, and Allegations out of the Old and New Testament, according to the last Translation*) is the most compleat, perfect, and exact Liturgy in the Christian World *Dippers Dipt*, p 16, 22. and *Gentle East*, 1644.

And this is the same in effect with what the Divines at the *Savoy* humbly proposed; and without all these Exceptions, that Champion, Dr. *Featly*, would not undertake his Vindication of them: by which it seems the Fort of the Church-Constitution and Discipline was not tenable as it stood at that time; but our great Church-men were resolved, that the World should know their Strength, as well as Reason, to regain with advantage in 1661, what they lost in 1641.

The Presbyterian Divines (as they were called) did urge, both rationally, heartily, and humbly, that the Ceremonies might be omitted, being doubtful whether the Church had power to enjoin mystical teaching Signs (which the Imposers confessed indifferent) of no real goodness, &c. which many of the Opposers accounted sinful, others inconvenient, and unsuitable to the simplicity of the Gospel; and had been, for a hundred Years, the Fountain of manifold Evils, &c. And herein they were not singular; for other men when disengaged, and Masters of their Liberty, have said as much, or enough to take off the edge, from Imposers to require them, or of wise men to desire them. I shall here produce the Judgment of some learned and judicious Conforming Divines, concerning Ceremonies. The first shall be the most eminent Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in that excellent *Irenicum*, the first born of his most learned Youth, and mature Reason and Judgment; and had it been the Work of his Age, it had been a Birth at full growth, in respect of Piety, Gravity, sweetness of Temper, beauty of Complexion, wise Observations and Experience, that, and *Author of the Irenicum*, had filled up the Epitaph of the Dean of St. Pauls. This is the last Proposal of Accommodation; 'That Religion be not clogg'd with Ceremonies.-- Christian Religion is a plain, simple, easy thing.-- By Ceremonies I do not mean here Matters of meer Decency and Order, for Order sake.--But Ceremonies properly taken for *Actions significative*, their lawfulness may with better grounds be scrupled, *pag. 67*. And before, *pag. 66*: We see the Primitive Church did not make so much of any uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies.--I shall quote too much, if I give way to what is mature, and past his own mending, without disparagement to his more grown Reason be it spoken.

The second is a great Scholar and Divine, the late worthy Mr. *G. Lawson*, (Rector of *Moor* in *Shropshire*) in his Exposition of the Second Commandment, *Theopolitica*, B. 2. c. 8. 'As for significant Ceremonies annexed to the Service of God, no ways conducing to the better performance thereof, I think they are better spared and omitted, than used and observed. For tho considered in themselves, without any reference to God's Worship, they be indifferent, and so in general may be lawful; yet if we examine their Original, the first occasion of their Institution; the Persons who use, or rather abuse them, and understand withal how needless and unprofitable they be, and how offensive to some weak Brethren; and also besides these may be instituted many more of that kind, and may be imposed upon the same ground; and that in the Church of *Rome* they have been an occasion of Superstition: it must needs be concluded, by impartial and judicious Men, that they are not expedient. To say, and publicly declare that they have no sanctifying Power, that they are
'neither

'neither Holy nor Unholy will not serve the turn; for the same may be
 'said of Images, at first, when they began to be used; and do what we
 'can, many of the People do account them to be Holy, make them parts
 'of God's Worship, and are more careful in the observation of them, than
 'they are of the more weighty Duties of Religi-
 'on.----Doctrines in this case will not prevail, if the
 'thing that they trusted to, be not taken from them.
 'So it may be, bating the degrees of Offence, when matters of Indifferen-
 'cy in themselves, are, by the generality of People not looked on as such,
 'but used as a necessary part of Divine Service. Dr. *Stillin. Iren.* p. 64.
 'They who industriously labour to keep out Popery, can never cleanse a
 'People from superstitions, while they keep up Ceremonies, an observa-
 'tion of present use.

My third Testimony is, a Man of great Learning, and of long standing
 in the Church, Mr. *John Lloyd B. D.* now of *North Tidworth in Wilts,*
Treat. of Episc. Liturg. Rites, &c. Lond. 1660. 'Many have entertained a
 'great fear, which hath alienated their Minds from all Episcopacy; name-
 'ly, that innumerable company of unnecessary and burdensome Ceremo-
 'nies be inseparable concomitants of Episcopal Government. Indeed
 'the fear is not vain, and without grounds, if we respect the degenerate
 'Episcopacy, as it is, if we regard the Primitive, which hath been, and
 'will be contented with a very few, if need be.--p. 32. S. 15. (the whole
 'Section gives a short and full account of Primitive simplicity.) One Rea-
 'son why ceremonies increased in the fourth Century, may be this, Be-
 'cause the Church more flourished in prosperity than at any time before,
 'and might be thought convenient, that the External Glory of the Church,
 'should be proportioned to the Glory of the Empire. p. 38. We may err,
 'as in defect, so in excess of Ceremonies, or in the choice, or in ac-
 'counting and compelling others to own them for unchangeable Aposto-
 'lick Institutes, or by too rigid pressing of every of them, especially upon
 'People of weak Capacity, humble peaceable, and scrupulous Consci-
 'ence.---Antiquity is venerable, yet it may not, ought not continue a
 'Rite or Ceremony in any Church, with whose Edification and Peace it is
 'become inconsistent. There be but few Ordinances meerly Ecclesiastical,
 'which have not in some Churches become noxious, or at least useless.
 'And there is a vicissitude of Profit or Detriment growing from them in
 'the same Churches, arising from notable changes in Persons and Circum-
 'stances.---If it should seem good to the Church of *England* to
 'mend their *Liturgie*, or compose a new one, (if need be) more
 'agreeable to the present Time, they should do therein no more than
 'the most famous Churches have done before; and which can be no dispa-
 'agement

'ragement to the Wisdom and Piety of the Composers of it, which intended only to make it as fit as could be for the state of the Church in their time, and not to frame and impose an Unchangeable Form, which could never prove incongruous to any possible variety in the state of the Church; for this is not in the power of any Persons or Churches, p. 54, 55. Thus far this great Student, modest, moderate good Man.

I will content my self with the Opinions of these three worthy Persons, when disengaged; and altho they conformed, they were and are no doubt of the same mind, free in their minds, when obliged in their practice to submit.

What more than what I have shewed, the Commissioners at the *Savoy* pleaded for, may be seen in the Account of their Proceedings: But what got they by those Debates besides satisfaction in their own Souls, that they debated and petitioned for Peace? A very little indeed! And what the Bishops gave with the one hand, they got with the other. It was strange and hard that they could not prevail so far as to get the *Commandments* in the Church-Catechism & Communion-Service to be after the last and best Translation in our Bibles; but our Children must be taught the 4th Commandment after the manner of the Judaizing Seventh-day-Sabbath Sect; for so they are taught, *Wherefore he blessed the [Seventh day] and hallowed it*; and our unwary People are taught to pray, that God would *incline their hearts to keep this Law*, that Law which enjoyneth the Seventh-day as the Sabbath, which God blessed & hallowed: whereas the Law, *Remember the Sabbath day*, which extends to the *First day*, as well as the *Seventh day*, and makes the First day moral, when appointed by the Lord of the Sabbath; (But this Doctrine was not consonant to the Opinions of Dr. Heylin, Mr. Thorndike, nor (which I wonder at) to the judicious Bp. Sanderson) as much as the Seventh was from the Creation. What if an inquiring Child that is catechised, should ask his Parent, What day do we keep as Sabbath? The First he'll say. But saith the Child, Why do we keep the first? what Commandment for that? or what Promise? for we are taught in the Catechism, *God blessed the Seventh day*. Is not this a temptation to keep the Seventh-day Sabbath? Had the Presbyterians pleaded for that Translation, they might have heard of their ignorance in the Hebrew: and demanding things not fit to be allowed, they would not grant them, lest they (as the Puritans have been misrepresented) should Judaize in keeping the Holy Sabbath.

The *Doxologie*, or conclusion of the Lord's Prayer [*for thine is the Kingdom, &c.*] to be used always. This was desired but denied.

Hist. of the Sabbath. Just Weights & Measures. Case of the Sabbath.

Query

Query. *Whether they have not thereby taught us this Opinion, that the Forms of Prayers are lawful, yet a variety is as lawful as a set form of words.*

We prove the lawfulness by our Saviour's Prescription, *When ye pray, say, &c.* And may we not prove a liberty, or a variety of expressions, keeping still to the same matter, when we read a difference in the same Prayer as delivered by two Evangelists, inspired by the same Spirit? and when we see the practice of the Church is sometimes to use, and sometimes to omit the *Doxologie* and Conclusion? And why shall the Church so severely enjoin the exact use of all her Forms, and they who omit, (when their Prudence and Conscience (as to some Prayers) tells them they should sometimes concerning some Petitions and Persons) are liable to censure, when a part of the Lord's Prayer, as delivered by St. Matthew, is constantly omitted? For ought I see, a liberty and variety of Prayers, strictly keeping to divine matter, with abbreviations and enlargements, is as lawful as a stinted invariable Form of words, and is a matter of Christian Liberty, to be used as shall best serve to the edification of the Church of Christ: and divers expressions are as much from the same Spirit (provided always they agree with the language of the Holy Ghost (as diversitie of Gifts, and consistent with the Unity of the Spirit. And they who plead for a necessity of Forms, must also yield to a variety upon the same subject, which we have for the King in the Service, and a few others.

A Reformation was thought absolutely necessary to Union. Hear what Mr. *Herbert Thorndike*, one of the Commissioners for the Church in the *Savoy*, wrote; 'But now that Unity is not to be had, without settling agreement in matters of Difference; to propose what may seem best for the Community of God's Church, in the cure of our breaches, is not to give offence, but to take it away. Nor do I know any Man professing the Reformation sincerely, that could not wish with all his heart, that the whole Order and Form to be settled, with the Circumstance of

' the same, might be according to the Primitive Simplicity and naked plainness of the Ancient Church. p. 245.---The form of Service now in force by Law, may be acknowledge capable of Amendment without disparagement either to the Wisdom of the Church that prescribed it, or of the Nation that enacted it.

Some promised much, but granted little: others begg'd more, & plead'd hard, but obtained not. And may not this justify the *Nonconformists* waiting for, and earnestly desiring a redress of material things, since they could obtain but very little then, and cannot in conscience subscribe and declare now? If they had been gratified then, and had now been discontented

tented without more, there had been more reason for the prejudice that is propagated against them.

If it be objected, *Why could not they have Conformed, as some of their Fellow-Commissioners did?*

I Answer. 1. Some very worthy Persons did conform, *Dr. Wallis, Dr. Horton, Dr. Lightfoot*; and after about seven Years silence, to the great loss of *Exeter Colledge, Oxford*, and the Church of God, *Dr. Conant* conformed, and these were all.

2. The Reasons why these did not, is, because, as the same Spectacles will not serve all Mens sight, so because they could not, as they oft declared, both to the shaking off some, and the displeasure of others within the Pale.

My last observation shall be upon the Persons that managed that Debate. The Commissioners that pleaded for the Union as it was, without a Reformation, were the strongest and stiffest of any in the Church of *England*. Men of great Learning, long experience in the Ecclesiastical Government; and that had suffered much, and were much exasperated, as being (several of them next the Bishops) most obnoxious to the Parliament, as most guilty of Innovations in Doctrine and Discipline, by the Informations and Complaint of as Learned, and as great Men as any of them in the Church of *England*, as may easily be produced out of the best account of those Times; all except *Dr. Morley, Dr. Earle, Dr. Sanderson*, (against whom I remember no Complaints) and a few beside. Their Constancy and Sufferings, did recommend them to the King's Favour; and the great Agreement in their Persuasions, held them to one another; and having the disposing of Preferments as they pleased, or at least the Recommendation of Candidates, Expectants complied with them, and were forward to walk according to their Measures. The moderating Bishop *Hall* was gone to Heaven; *Prideaux, Brownrig*, and others of another temper, and so it was easier for them to carry all their own way: and two things, as conducing to their designs, was necessary.

1. To frame a Convocation to their minds, and to that end, great care and pains were used to keep out, and to get in, by very undue Proceedings. Protestations were entred against all Incumbents not ordained by Bishops, though it was not through their faults; and to exclude others, that they feared had any Inclination to Moderation indeed, under the name of *Presbytery*. And such an Election being made, as there was no great fear of calling any thing to free Debates, few leading Men being of another mind, so there were no Debates to speak of; the greatest that I could hear of, was between the *Cambridge* Professor *Dr. Gunning*, and the *Oxford* Professor *Dr. Creed*, about (a hard Point indeed) *The age of Children to be Confirm'd*.

F

2. For

2. For all His Majesties most gracious and excellent Declaration, concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs, they laboured, by all their Interest and Endeavours, to have a Parliament that would pass what they would contrive and prepare for them. And so they, instead of sending more Labourers into the Vineyard, hired (as some say) Labourers to turn out, or keep out Labourers from entering in. And the Labourers in Pension were not employed only in State, but also in Church-Work. Their Interest was so great in that Parliament, as to enact what was reckoned an Innovation in some Colledges in both Universities (by the above-named Bishop *Brownrig* and *Prideaux*, &c. in these words, 'By introdu-

Copy of the Proceedings, &c. 1641. Innovation 17.

'cing Latin Service in the Communion of late in 'Oxford, and into some Colledges in *Cambridg* at 'Morning and Evening Prayer; so that some 'young Students and Servants in the Colledges do 'not understand their Prayers. But now the Latin Service may be used in any Colledge, or Hall, in *Oxford, Cambridge, Westminster, Winchester, and Eaton*, and Convocation of Clerks.

Dr. Tuckney, Dr. Wallis, D. Conant, Horton, Lightfoot, Mr Baxter, Mr. Woodbridge, Dr. Seamen, Dr. Spurflow, Jacomb, Bates, &c. and Bishop Keynolds on this side.

The Commissioners on the other side, must be acknowledged Men of great and sound Learning, and of more experience in the Pastoral Office, and had conversed more with great Congregations than the others had, and so were more fit to Advise; as learned Practitioners in Physick are fitter to advise, and more likely to hit the Temper of the Patient, than a Professor in the Theory. And the Account of their Proceedings will to Posterity shew to the impartial and inquisitive, both their Parts and their Temper. When I read them, I do the less wonder at what I heard, that a great Bishop in his prime Visitation, soon after, did warn his Clergy against reading that book.

Bp S. at Stony-Stratford in Bucks.

Thus was the Platform of the present Constitution drawn, and it stands leaning altogether to the one side, and what wonder, that many that seem wholly to lean upon it, do cry, *It falls, it falls*, that was not laid upon a larger Foundation. But how did these Master-builders proceed in the Government of their New-Reformed Church? It seemed to be built no larger than to contain one Family, the genuine Sons of such Fathers: there was but one narrow Door of admission to it, a strong Lock upon it, and the sole power of the Keys was in trusty hands, and the Sword in the hand of a Friend, there was no outward Apartment in it to entertain Strangers, or belonging to it: But some got a false Key to the Door, as many call it,
a Key

a Key of a large sense ; and when some got in, more crowded in ; and so the *Latitudinarian* in Charity came in with the *Latitudinarian* in Discipline, to the no little grief of some who do not like their company. The Fathers keep above Stairs, and now and then come down among us, and send their Officers to visit us, and have their Watch renewed every Year to tell Tales of us ; and they that are without Doors, cry, If there be any Love in our Governors to Christ, and his divided Flock, that we would but widen the Door, and reform but ill Customs ; but we say, we cannot help our selves or them, for the Law will have it so. The Law had a two-edged Sword of Penalties, and some of them who took Sword to guard and assist the Church, having spent their heat, grew for the most part cold and lazy ; and more Dissenters were smitten with the Key, than the Sword : And so nothing almost went on currantly and vigorously, for more got into the Communion than some would have, and so many kept out, that there were too many to be dealt with. Several of the Bishops having made work for others, and having their Wills, grew very gentle. I begin within mine own Knowledg, or good Information. I shall not need to speak of Bishops, *Monk* and *Gauden*, nor of *Reynolds*, who carried the Wounds of the Church (in his Heart and Bowels) to his Grave with him, as is well known to many that knew him : but speak of the most rigorous at first hand. Doctor *Laney*, first Bishop of *Peterborough* ; who had made a great busle in the croud of aspiring Men in *Cambridg*, till he came up several Stories, as high as he desired to be, was very moderate in his Government. In his prime Visitation, (as I have heard one speak that was by) before *Bartholomew*, he in his Chamber told some of his Clergy what he came about ; and as tho he would wipe his Hands, said : *ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ νόμος* ; Not I, but the Law ; and could (to use his own phrase to a scrupulous Person) look through his Fingers, and suffer a worthy *Non-conformist* to preach publicly very near him, for some Years together after his remove to another Bishoprick.

Bishop *Saunderson* was severe, and troubled long with a sharp Disease, which might exasperate his Mind, had a Roll of Ministers under his angry Eye, designed for Discipline ; but when he drew nigh to his latter End, he commanded that Roll to be burnt, and said, He would die in Peace.

Dr. *Earle* Bishop of *Salisbury*, was a Man that could do Good against Evil ; forgive much, and of a charitable Heart, and died, to the no great sorrow of them, who reckoned his Death was just, for labouring all his might against the *Oxford Five-mile Act*.

But most remarkable is that Passage in the last *Testaments*, printed both in *Englisk* and *Latin*, of the Learned Dr. *Cosins* Bishop of *Durresm*, printed

with his Funeral Sermon and Life. He leaves a mark upon the Presbyterian, to satisfie us that he was none, but tells the Church, That our great and main Work is, to Unite. The Passage deserves Transcribing, viz. pag. 126. 'I take it be my Duty, and of all my Brethren, especially the *Bishop*, and Ministers of the Church of God, to do our *utmost endeavours*, according to the Measure of Grace which is given to every one of Us, that at last an *End* may be put to the Differences of Religion, or at least they may be lessened, &c.

How others of their Order, that are dead, and alive, that managed that Affair, for the standing or shaking of this Church, have carried themselves in Debates, and great Trials, is better known to others than to me. Only I will crave leave to say, That one, at that time but Doctor, hath not consulted the quiet of peaceable considering Men, by provoking Mr. *Baxter* to shew Reasons of his Nonconformity, which are too hard for many to answer, and unanswered yet. And it is to no purpose to set *R.* against *B.* and *Baxter* against *Baxter*, as if none could answer him till he turn *Conformist* and answer himself; and it will not do, to whisper, that the Man is rude and crack'd; for indeed the more crack'd he is, the more Kernel is seen.

The wife and good Bishop *Wilkins*, was a Man of another Spirit, and took comfort in his healing Endeavours upon his Death-bed. And the Lord of his infinite Mercy, move and engage their Right Reverend Survivors, and other eminent Divines of the Church, to lay to heart our doleful, broken, and declining State, and supplicate the King and Parliament to unite and strengthen the Protestant Interest. A far better Work, than to invite the *Nonconformists* to come in, as things do stand, or to provoke any of them to shew cause of their Nonconformity, which tends but to exasperate some, and to shake others out of their own Communion, if they prevent it not. I do not speak at all adventures. If some could have executed the Laws, or prevailed with Magistrates so to do, we should have had a Militant Church indeed. In the Year 1669, we had several Articles sent down to the Clergy, with private Orders to some, to make the Conventiclers as few and small as might be;

The eighth and last was this, *Whether you do think * they That is, The might be easily suppress by the Assistance of the Civil Magistrate? Some made bold to answer more than Ay, or No.*

Since, what encouragement had a sort of scandalous Persons to become Informers, But God took some of these into his own hand; some cut off, and some convinced; and through the gentleness of the Civil Magistrate, and shame of the Office, Meetings went on, and grew, as they are at this day. — Some of the Informers were struck into an

Awe

Awe of the Preachers, and manner of their preaching; others baffled, and some, as *Gibson of Leicester*, died miserably. See the life of *Mr. John Tregofs*.

I have been large in this Head; I will be shorter in the rest.

4. The fourth Consideration is, The Qualifications of their Persons. They have their faults no doubt: The Angels of the Churches are not Angels of Heaven. They are better known to many great Men in Church and State, than to me, who very rarely see or converse with any. But if they required my Testimony, I would give it, That for Loyalty to their King I never knew any more. They cannot drink his health, but they helpt to pray him to his Throne, pray that he may long sit upon it, and pray him towards Heaven. They break his Laws, say some, and sow Sedition, &c. Do they so? Then spare them not. They are grieved they cannot keep his Laws, that such Laws are made which they cannot keep. But have they resisted, when their Goods have been seized, or broken Prison, &c. What Conspiracy have they been in? Blessed be God, who hath kept them above the Slanders of their Adversaries, and convinced them (if any thing will) that they can preach, and pray, and not into a War; and neither Preach nor pray us into a War, or a Plot.

Their Holiness and Morality is conspicuous, and they are useful many ways in the Common-Wealth; and for their Ministerial Abilities, allowing them but those Grains which no Man of Charity denies, and no Man of any Abilities can pass for currant without, they (are men of different statures, it is true, but some) are eminent for variety of excellent and useful Learning, and known to the Church of God, by many rare pieces of Practical Divinity, and Controversal. Beside the many Tracts of particular Men, that will be valued while Christianity hath any name among Ages to come. See but a Specimen of their Dexterity in Practical Divinity, in those Lectures, called, *The Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, and Supplement*. For positive, in their Morning Exercises at *St. Giles in the Fields*, &c. And their Polemical, in their Morning Exercises against Popery. And there are very able Divines and Preachers up and down the Land, beside those that are known in London. What Service hath *Mr. Pool's Nullity and Dialogues*, *Dr. Owen's Answer to Fiat Lux*, *Mr. Baxter's Key for Catholics*, &c. and *Mr. Clarkson's Moral Divinity of the Papists*, and his Observations upon the *Jesuits Speeches*, done? What a notable Book is *Mr. Hughes's Man of Sin*? I hope no Man will think, that I look upon them as the only Champions in this Cause, or extol them, to lessen or deprive any of our Conforming Worthies of the honour of their open and hazardous Engagements against that Daring Faction. No, but my Soul
longs

longs to see them all under the same Banner and of the same body, and the same Denomination. The Measures of these must not be taken from some Mens Books, who had magnified their Office more, if they had not exposed and villified them and their writings. Are there any mean and weak among them? They may be useful if nourished and improved; but the best of them all, hath no more Liberty, besides what he ventures for, than the very meanest. I would conclude, humbly proposing these Queries:

First. Whether it is thought that any of them, are enabled from above, with Ministerial Abilities; and instructed to the Kingdom of God?

I will not descend so low as our Legal Rule of Trial; Are they fitted for the Ministerial Office? Have they Understanding in the Scripture? Skill in Original and other useful Learning? Are they Orthodox in Judgment, free from Heresie? Do they consent to the avowed Doctrines of the Church of England? Have they the Gift of Utterance? Are they willing, and desirous to serve in the Gospel of Christ? No doubt, but from the oldest to the youngest of them, they will submit to an Examination, if thought necessary to their Admission. Besides the full proof that many of them have given, even to an Excellency, above most of our Brethren. What of all this? will be said unto me, They dissent from the Discipline, Government and Legal Worship. I ask again, are they for any essential, fundamental Parts of Apostolical, truly Primitive Church-Government? Will they promise to administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel, as Christ enjoyned them; as the Apostles and their next Successors did celebrate them (as nearly as can be learned from undoubted and currant History?) The chief of them say they can, and it is that they contend for. Lastly, I ask; Do we think that Christ would have sent them out to preach, or forbid them, the Apostles have given them the Right-hand of Fellowship; or not? Would St. Paul have rejoyced that the Gospel was preached by them or not?

Then, secondly, I query; Whether any that are intrusted by Jesus Christ in the Over-sight of his Church, and administration of Government and Discipline in it, can forbid such Men to minister in his Church?

Here seems to me to be a Repugnancy between Christ and his Officers in his Church: He fits and qualifies Men with Gifts, and Furniture for his Churches Edification, and Good, who stand in need of them; makes them willing to spend and to be spent; but the Governours of the Church will not admit them in, but cast them out; and by their Canon judge them excommunicate: so whom Christ sends, they refuse. Whose Will should sway, the Master of the Family, Christ, or his Stewards? But it will be objected, they will not conform to the Church as established by Law; and better the Church should lose their Labours, than the Hedge of Government.

vernment thrown down for them, *Dr. Stillingfl. Irenic. p. 42. Says, the Magistrate cannot forbid true Doctrine to be preached.*

I humbly offer, 1. Whether any such Laws should be made, stand in force, or executed against Men sound in Doctrine, and enabled by Christ to serve him? 2. Whether this Form of Government to which they cannot conform, be that Form of Constitution to which they must submit, or else be deprived according to the mind of Christ? I go upon this Supposition, That all particular Laws of the Church must agree with the general Rules of Christ, and not be to the damage of the Church of Believers. 3. Whether the Apostolical Church-Practice, be not rather a Rule to all succeeding Ages to follow, than the Fourth Age which waxed wanton in Ceremonies, and cast those Ceremonious Shadows from her Body, because the Sun of Imperial Favour, and Prosperity did shine upon her? 4. I humbly offer, that supposing that the present Church-Frame of Government, Discipline, Worship and Ceremonies, (which as it is with the scrupled Assents, and Additions, and Penalties, is no older than 1662.) be nearest of any in the World, as near as may be to the Prime-Primitive Apostolical Church; for all this, whether there be no way to be used, or taken with the Non-conforming Brethren (suppose them all under an Error as to this particular of Church-Government and Ceremonies) but to silence them, to forbid them to preach, upon such penalties? Or ought not the Governours of the Church, out of respect to their Master *Jesus Christ*, and to the Gifts and Graces which he hath given to them, and thereby commended them in his Name, to the Acceptation of his Flock, to find out some way to render them useful to the service of his People; I do suppose, that all, whom Christ hath qualified with Abilities and made willing, and that have dedicated themselves to his Service, ought to be received and employed. (And may I speak and write it trembling) Is there not implied a Wo to them that hinder, as well as to them that preach not the Gospel?

Objection, *But they are disobedient to the Law of the Land, &c.*

I answer, To the Temporal Laws? they submit to them. To the Temporal Laws requiring Conformity? I make bold to ask, are any forbidden by that Law to preach, &c. whom Christ hath fitted for it? then, ought not that Law to be revised and repealed? Are there no Conditions or Terms required by that Law, but such as are strictly the Terms which Christ (by whom the Christian Magistrate bears Rule) hath directed them to make for all that shall enter into the Church? If so, then it must be a Law of the *Medes and Persians*; But there is no such thing pretended. This Law was not given in the *Mount*. And there are many among us that are for the Expiration and Non-obligation of the fourth Law, delivered by God himself.

himself. There is no temporal Law, but is nulled or amended when it appears detrimental to the Common-wealth ; and why not, when the Church suffers by any Law, Ought not that to be looked into ?

Object. But the Church needs them not, and there are more in the Universities, and Countries, and Cities, that will conform, than the Revenue of the Church will maintain.

Ans. 1. It is one thing to admit our Non-conforming Brethren to the Preferments of the Church, and another to the Service of the Church ; admit them first, and God will provide for them in time : I believe they desire not that any Man should be displaced for them.

2. Put them into a Capacity for the discharge of the Ministerial Office, for which they are prepared, and many of them have Episcopal Ordination.

3. He that saith there are too many Labourers for the Work of Christ in the Church, must hold, that Christ gives Gifts superfluous, and gives Talents to them that have no place to trade with them, or knows not the weight of the Pastoral Charge, or the great need of Souls, and of more help.

4. If there be such store of Ministers that there is no room, it would be acceptable to Christ to take care of Forreign Plantations ; But alas ! How many go astray for want of Shepherds ! [*See Mr. Godwin's Negroes Advocate.*]

Lastly ; I doubt not, but it is in the Power of our Church Governors to make a great Change for the great Advantage of the Church ; some of them have a great influence upon the Legislation ; many have interest in, if not, great freedom with the great Men in Power, Opportunities to speak for the Mourning Church, and to shew them what is good ; which would more become the Ministers of Christ, than to expose the Infirmities of the *Non-conformists*, or misreport their Doings. If in the present Exigence and Dangers of the Church, (which they are sensible of, because of our Divisions, or else many would not invite them in, or condemn them for keeping out) Our great Men in the Church do not all that in them lies to procure our Peace, they are like to answer for it to the Prince of Peace. They that urge the Law against their Brethren, must either convince them of the goodness of the Law, which they can never do, as that to which they ought, upon peril of their Salvation to submit ; or else declare their Grief, that with all their Importunities, Prayers, and favour with Men in Power, they cannot get the Law made easy ; or else this lies against them, that many of the Church procured the Law, which was enacted upon their Advice, and to gratify them : and if so, then they but for a time conceal their own uncharitableness, under the Wing of a Law, which is pleasing

to them. It is evident to all that have eyes to see, and that have two Eyes to see withal, who hath gotten by this Uniformity. If it be said, that Popery hath got by Non-conformity, they will readily reply, Who made them *Nonconformists*? They gave them warning of the Danger, and did all that was in the Power of loyal, peaceable, honest Men, for Unity and Peace. For my part, I cannot reply, nor confute their Vindication. And so much for this Head.

5. Consider their Behaviour since their unhappy Ejection, under their many Sufferings. That their Sufferings have been great, is notorious to them that know them, or have Christian Bowels in them. To what end shall I make a distribution of them, in Spirituall, into Temporall, into Personall, and Domestickal? They are condemned for making a Separation; of all Men in the Land they have the greatest cause to be for Union, and against Separation. They have suffered many cutting Separations! such as, from the Magistrates Favour and good Opinion; from their beloved Congregations; from their Habitations and Maintenance; from their Libraries and Studies; from their own Friends, especially the worldly-wise; from their former Familiars; from their Wives and Children. Abundance of them have been made of the Order of Mendicants, to eat other Mens Bread, to wear other Mens Cloaths, to procure their own Liberty, and to dispose of their Children to Callings with other Mens Money and Charity. These things are nothing indeed to them that have no Sences! Have they suffered in their Names, in their Liberties, Imprisonment, where they got their Deaths, as above said? It hath been a dear Separation to them! The Non-conformity hath lost some Ministers many thousand pounds. And what have all these things been for? For their own Faults, Humors, factious Nature? &c. Have none of them any Wit, Reason, Policy, Religion, Conscience? Are all so naught, or so foolish, such Babes or Mad-men, that they hate Peace, hate their Wives and Children, and their own Flesh? Or, cannot chuse what's best, a good Living, or a nasty Prison, or be in peril of it? O that we would forbear to judg our Fellow-Servants! They declare plainly and truly, they cannot conform to the present Constitution; Who should best know that, They, or We? Will it follow we can, therefore they may? Or, that good Men have, therefore all good Men can? Two things have been declared by them.

I have spoken of their Sufferings once and again, but not for the same Cause, nor the same Things.

They that think them to be against a Church-Government, because they cannot conform to all particulars in this, are much mistaken.

G

1. That

1. That they cannot forbear their Ministry; preach they must.
2. As dear as Preaching is to them, and the Magistrates favour, and a portion of the settled Maintenance, yet they cannot comply on the Legal Terms.

But have they attempted their Liberty by any treacherous Conspiracies? Have they preached Seditiously? or been *Achans* in the Camp, or *Nadabs* and *Abihu's*? They ask no Favour, fear no Accusations. They may say, as that excellent Mr. *Joseph Allen*, in his gallant Speech (wise, humble, and full) to the Judge, when sentenced to pay a *hundred Mark*, and lie in Prison till it was paid; 'He was glad that it had appeared, before his Country, that whatsoever he was charged with, he was guilty of nothing but doing his Duty; and that all that did appear by the Evidence, was only, That he had sung a *Psalm*, and instructed his Family, others being there, and both in his own House; and that if nothing which had been urged, would satisfy, he should, with all cheerfulness and thankfulness, accept whatsoever sentence his Lordship should pronounce upon him, for so good and righteous a Cause. [*Life of Mr. Jos. Allen, pag. 59.*]

Object. But some of them gather Churches, preach in time of publick Service, and are ill tempered Men, &c.

A. I meddle not in this, as it is a Matter of Controversy, stated and agitated by different Persuasions: but as it is a matter of Complaint; and so, I say, we ought to do all that good Men can do, for one Mind, one Way, to narrow Controversies, by enlarging Conditions of Communion.

2. Many cannot help preaching in time of publick Service.

1. Because else they cannot preach at all, for the distance of their Auditors.

2. Against their Wills they are constrained, because many that refuse to hear the publick Ministers, would be drawn to Meetings of *Quakers*: And this was one reason which good Dr. *Stanton* in particular, gave for his preaching at St. *Albans* at such times. So many of the *Non-conformists* are a second Sieve; if they preach not, much Corn would fall to the gathered heaps of other Dissenters.

3. Seeing they are under an Obligation of Preaching, in one sense, the more publick their preaching is, the better, for then they will be sure to preach nothing but what all may hear.

4. The Law makes no difference between Publick and their own Houses, if they exceed Five; if therefore they judge themselves (and none can better judge than themselves) obliged to preach upon peril of the Law, they take the more publick Places, no greater Penalties being to be suffered for that, than a meer private Corner.

Lastly,

Lastly, Hath any of them suffered as an evil Doer? (taking evil doing in the common sense) or deserved to suffer these eighteen Years? Have they not asserted the Common Interest? sought the publick Welfare? opposed Popery? and been as obedient Subjects to the King as any other, save only in this controverted Point? What pitty is that, the Bosom of the Church were not as open and as large as the King's gracious Protection is to them, as leading peaceable and quiet Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty!

What tho they complained! have they sense, or are they stupid! Have they stirred Sedition, and distracted the Government? taking the advantage of a horrid Plot to play their own Game; or laid a Counter-mine, (as it pleased one of our Moderators, or Plot discoverers to entitle his Book) — If they are so gracious with the rich Tradesmen, and populace, it shall be to their Honour, and is to their Comfort, that they have made no other use of the goodness of the People, than to save their Souls. How glad should all true Protestants be, that the Presbyterian Plot, is fallen together with their own Popish Plot, upon the same Pates! Or was the Separation of the *Non-conformists* the Door by which Popery was entering in? Then indeed the Door must be stopt up by all means. But by this time, it is but too apparent, and with grief be it written, that the Church of *England* had bred such Birds, as would have plucked out her Eyes. The Heifers always went in the Church-yard, with which the Papists plow'd; shameless Hypocrites that cried up the Church, to throw it down!

Not to multiply Objections and Answers. It is, or may be clear, that nothing but Conscience of Sin and Duty doth govern the Learned, Judicious, and honest *Non conformists*. I suppose there are many of them that deserve these Characters: and because they are governed by their Judgments and Consciences; it is the great Duty of Governours to have respect to them, and to take away all Occasions of our bleeding Divisions, It is in the Power of our Governours, to remove the causes, and not in them. If the Judgment and Consciences of our Governours be to walk strictly, according to the Rule and Measure of our Conformity, and cannot relax, nor remove any part of it; and the Judgment of the *Non-conformists* be, that they cannot come up to it: then the Divisions must remain as now they are, and the Decision be deferred to the last coming of Jesus Christ. But may it not be decided before that? for where hath Christ made the Governours Consciences the exact Measure of other Ministers? But our Laws declare most of the things in Controversy, to be in their own nature indifferent, to be mutable, and therefore it is in their Power to take away both the Things, and the Obligation to them; and to bind us only

to the Observation of necessary things, and to leave things which they found indifferent, as they found them, without judging one another. And for this reason, Wisdom and Charity requires a relaxation upon their parts; and they have this to plead for them, that they have long tried to bring Ministers and People to an uniformity in these things, but could not; and therefore, for Peace, and Love, Unity, and Edification, they have taken away their Obligation.

That the *Non-Conformists* cannot subscribe, and declare, and subject themselves to this Yoke (how easy soever it seems to many) because they cannot in their Judgment and Conscience approve and do them, needs no great labour to prove it, to any Man of Charity.

1. Because their Interest, as well as Duty, hath put them upon the serious study of the Cause. And being Men of Learning, Light, Labour, and of Years, they may be supposed as fit to find out their own part, as other Men to find it for them. And to any that hath but the desire to see, patience to read, and that thinks not to throw them off with a scornful Huff; they have written like Men of Parts, Judgment, and Temper. And they daily almost send abroad into the world, the Issues of serious Thoughts, and ripe Understandings, and Appearances of great Seriousness and Resolution.

Beside Mr. Baxter, Mr. Corbet, and others, The Sacred Hierarchy, and the small Treatise of Scandal, and indifferent Things, give evidence of close and deep investigation of things.

2. They do not follow the Dictates of a weak and erring Conscience, but fear to sin against a tender Conscience, upon the best information of their Judgments. There is a great difference between a weak Conscience and a tender Conscience; a weak Conscience follows a weak Judgment, and the clearer and stronger the Judgment is, the more tender should the Conscience be. It may therefore seem, that their dissent proceeds not from their Weakness, and that their obstinacy proceeds not from their Will, as opposing Light and Reason; but from the settlement and determination of their Judgment and their Sincerity, not daring to act against their Judgments. But if it were their Weakness, it must be indulged; if it were their Obstinacy against Reason, (which appears not) what will a wise Father do with a stomachful Child? Will he provoke and encrease his Stomach, by requiring of him needless things with great rigour, and not rather qualify and win him?

3. If it be not Conscience of Sin that makes them dissent, it is either their Policy for some worldly Interest, or their Folly. If the first, then it cannot consist with worldly Policy, to take ways directly contrary to what they aim at. What honour is it for a Man to be railed upon, reviled, suspected?

suspected? &c. What Profit is it for a Man to quit a Certainty for an Uncertainty? and to live precariously? Where the Policy of *Non-Conformity* lies, doth not appear to me. Is it their Folly? Are there no wise Men among them? not one! They have had Experience by this time to make them wise, if nothing else. If they are Fools, it is for *Christ*. They come not behind their Neighbours for Wit, and Abilities.

4. What, but Conscience of Sin and Duty, could afford them that Peace and Joy, in Disgraces and Sufferings, in Hazards, both living and dying! You'll say, *Fanaticism* may end in fancied Joy and Comforts. True, but these Men could as well distinguish between the Effects of Imagination, and Self-examination, between a Rock and Sand, and have taken as much pains to avoid a Cheat, as other Men. It must be granted, that many that have drawn Sufferings upon themselves deservedly, by their Imprudence, have flattered themselves in high Conceits, and conceited Comforts. But whether the Sufferings of Men of understanding, ripeness of Judgment, Inquisitiveness into their Case, their Reasons, Motives, and after Prayer and Diligence, have deliberately chosen a suffering Parr, and found Comfort from the Conscience of their Sincerity, be no more than the Comfort of a Hypocrite under the Power of Delusion, ought not rashly to be censured, and be rejected, as no Argument of their being conscientious?

5. If they are not conscientious in their *Non-conformity*, then they are disobedient to the King, and the Laws; they are Factious, Disturbers of the Churches Peace, Schismatical, and Enemies to the Churches Growth and Union: they are Hypocritical, and in a word Atheistical; they are unrighteous, unkind, unmerciful to their own Flesh, to their Wives and Children oppressive to those few that are liberal to them; yea many have destroyed themselves, and no less than this can be said of their Way, that it is the high way of Sin and certain Damnation. And if they are such wicked Persons, such Hypocrites in Masks and Cloaks, they are but used too well; and better they should be out of the Church, than in it. But then to bring them off from these horrid Imputations; these things are considerable;

1. If they were not Men of Integrity and Consciences, they would not keep without, because there is more to be got within. Doubtless they are not the only conscientious Men; for there are many thousands I hope, of sincere, good Men that conform, that have Peace and Comfort in a faithful discharge of their Duties. But, I say, if our Dissenting Brethren were not conscientious, and sincere, then they would swallow Oaths or Declarations, subscribe to Salt and Spittle, for the sake of the present World. He that acts not with respect to the World,

to come, must needs act for the good things of this. Now 'tis clear that the *Conformists* have the higher Honour and Precedence, and the fattest Morfels.

2. Our *Non-Conformists* have a better Character, and are looked upon as Conscientious Men, and fit for the Churches Service; 1. Because of the due Respect, and Repute they have among Men of Parts, Estates and Temper. 2. Because of the many Invitations, and even Chidings to unite and come in: which supposeth them to be Men of Worth and Goodness, or else the further off the better. 3. Because of the oft vanishing talk of an Indulgence in the first Years of their *Non-Conformity*, *Comprehension*, since, and *fair Promises* often made. 4. Because that many Justices of the Peace angry enough for the Church, and not pleased with them, have forbore to act against them, and could not find in their Hearts to execute the Laws upon Conscientious Men, though of different Apprehensions. My Conclusion is; That they appear to be Men of Conscience, and if so, way should be made for their coming in. One thing is urged to prejudg their tendernefs, that Conscientious Men should come as far as they can, and as near a closure as may be. Ah! what though they can do much, yet as to actual Admission, It is not doing some or many things that will bring them in; for they must declare and subscribe to all and every thing. I knew a Man of Years and Parts, that could conform to all things, save the Cross, and lost near 200 *l. per Annum*, for that. It is all or nothing in this case. If we would bring them in, take down the narrow Doors, and make them a Passage of just Dimension and Latitude. Upon these Premises, That the Case of the Dissenting Brethren is hard; that what they demanded, or proposed upon the Kings Commission, to the Bishops and the Commissioners for the Church, were but what was thought fit to be considered of by Men, no doubt of as great Learning, and other Qualifications, as any other of the same Quality; That their Sufferings have been very great, their Demeanour peaceable, their Abilities valuable, and their Dissent conscientious, I do humbly conclude, and propose it to my Reverend Superiours, in any place of Power, Favour or Interest, that they would sincerely endeavour the qualifying of these worthy Persons, for a legal discharge of their Ministerial Duties: A thing so pleasing to God, agreeable to the Government and Condescension of *Jesus Christ*, to the Christian Temper; so conducing to the Churches Union, Peace, Growth and establishment; to the silencing of many Controversies, and that fearful Clamour and Accusation of Schism, that I am nor able to express it. I cannot, it is acknowledged, judge what is another Mans particular Duty; but I humbly conceive it is mine in my place (which is but low indeed) to provoke any Superiours to it. And if I were in their
place

place (which is but a Supposition next to a Dream) I should neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep with Satisfaction, till this were done, or endeavoured ; nor think of appearing before *Jesus* the Chief Shepherd, with Joy or Acceptation. Hath he required this Uniformity at our hands, of this Extent, with these Sanctions, having for many Years seen no better Effects of them ?

Hath not his Gracious Majesty by a late Proclamation for a great, and necessary Duty of fasting and Prayers, made this one end of that Solemn Duty, to unite the Hearts of his Protestant-Subjects ? Have we not in one Prayer represented the bleeding Wounds from our Divisions, and in another prayed for Union ? Have many taken Direction to wrestle with God, (Laugh and Scorn who dare at the Word) to grant us that Blessing ? And what was the meaning of it ? Was no more to be understood by it, than to bring the Dissenting Brethren on a sudden to see, what after many Years Study, Prayers and Sufferings they cannot see ? On a sudden to convert them against their Reason ? And to condemn themselves for their Dissent. Surely, I cannot think it : for what were this but to pray for an Impossibility or a Miracle, and to pray in vain, in our Solemn Humiliation ! If Union be so desirable a Mercy, as certainly it is ; what shall we do for Union ? Are there no other Terms of Union but these ? Without doubt it is their great Sin, not to come as near to a Closure as possibly they can ; but doth all the Duty lie on their side ; and no more upon us, than to call them in ? And if not, let them be excommunicated from the Church, if not accursed of God ! Or were they never meant, as being no Protestants ; or not Loyal Subjects ? And what are they that say or think so ? The Lord in Mercy grant, we may not see such a Trial, as I doubt not they would by the Grace of God, as forwardly engag'd in, as true Protestants, and as Loyal Subjects to the King and Government, to the Expence and Profusion of their dearest Blood.

I cannot think any thing more suitable to the Clemency of the King's Nature, who hath alwaies been ready to gratifie peaceable Designs. Can we think it is not suitable to the Constitution of the late Great, and United Parliament, or to any other that shall be chosen by a free Election ? This great Body hath as quick discerning Eyes as ever any other had, and have made as deep Discoveries of the Works of Darknes as any other, for their time : and see a necessity of uniting Protestants at home, and succouring Protestants abroad ; and cannot they discern, by what Persons, whose Endeavours, to whose purposes our Constitutions have been screwed so high ? They are not unsensible by whom they have been called a Presbyterian Parliament, and who are afraid of their undoing all : Perhaps indeed they would think it hard Measure, that every man in *England* should
be

be turned out of Doors, that will not be content that his House shall be exactly Uniform. They may by Experience know that there may be Peace and Unity, and Charity in Houses, that are of different Figure and Form. There is a vast difference between pulling down painted Glass, which keeps out Light, and making Doors wider, or taking down some Partitions; and pulling down Houses. Oh! let it never be said, that Church-Men are most morose, difficult, and stiff, and can grant nothing, but in a great Extremity.

And I pray God that he would move, and effectually work upon their Hearts, to take the Opportunities and Advantages God puts into their Hands, to supplicate and promote the great Work of Healing. It will be a Work most pleasing to all *Conformists*, that have the truest Principles of Christianity, that are not factious to keep what they have, or think the gain of Peace to the Church, will bring a loss to any of them; or that are not Melancholy, and given to pore upon Shadows, and to think their Fancies to be the unalterable Frame of Antiquity. If we cannot distinguish between an Alteration and a Dissolution; between Reformation (of what hath been changed one way or other, in every Princes Reign, since the 2d of *Edw. 6.*) and an Extirpation, we are not Cathedral men, that know the note may be changed, and the Instrument unbroken, and that the same *Psalm* may be read and sung.

Many cry out upon *Schism*, that miss of the Notion; It is a very great Sin! Should we not therefore do what possibly we can, to remove the Causes, and to redeem Souls from the Sin and Guilt of it? To this end, let us take notice, that the Carnal Heart is the Seat of *Schism*. Are there no Schismatical Notions, or Passions and Lusts in us within the Pale? We know that *Uniformity* in Discipline and Modes of Worship, could not extinguish, or restrain Divisions in former daies. How was the Church divided between those two, the prevailing and rising *Arminian* Innovators, and the *Anti-Arminian* Propugnators of the Doctrine and ancient Discipline of the Church? And the Feuds were greater between these in many Respects, than between the *Conformist* and *Non-conformist*. And the straining of the Girdle of *Uniformity* burst the Buckles, and the Garments hung loose, till by a new Act, the Girdle was made stronger, and less than it was before, and new Buckles made a purpose for it.----

There is an Unity, where there is not an Uniformity, and *Vice versa*. To what Church in *London* can a man go, and find an Uniformity, exactly keeping with Rubricks and Orders? and yet there is a *Conformity*, and in general an *Unity*. I might instance in Ministers, and People's deviating from the Rule, in Prayers. What Uniformity among the People? some standing, others kneeling, and others leaning, if not sitting; Some facing the

East,

East, others the *West*, and others the *North* and *South*; some use the *Re-*
sponds, some low, and others loud, and others silent; and yet there may
 be an Unity in the *Amen*, either oral or mental. *Uniformity* will never be
 forced to Particulars, it must lie in Generals, as Unity in Essentials. God
 both in the works of Nature, Providence and Grace, is most glorious in
 Variety, in Multiformity. Uniformity, as it is an outward manifestation of
 Unity, and as an help to Unity and Edification, and Peace, is most desira-
 ble; but too rigorous pressing of it, is one cause of *Schism*, and *Con-*
tentions. To a clear stating of *Schism*, we must enquire into the Church as
 invisible, visible, as in its one Essential Nature, separate from Legal Estab-
 lishment, and in its Legal Establishment; and accordingly distinguish of
Schism, which is aggravated from Circumstances. In our days *Non-Confor-*
mity and *Schism* are made convertible, whereas the internal Causes may be
 in *Conformists*, as well as *Non-Conformists*. But what is the external Bond
 and Ligature of *Conformity*? what makes the *Conformist*, and what makes
 the *Non-Conformist*? Take away the Mound and Pale, and the Inclosure,
 and the Open-field is all one Field for the Flocks to feed together. Some
 have extolled the Act of Uniformity as a blessed Act; and some as the
 Bulwark of the Protestant Religion. It must be acknowledged that it is a
 Blessing to the Church, to have nursing Fathers, and to have our Religion
 established by Law. But he that is the Author and Founder of our Religi-
 on is the Bulwark also, and the King's Life and Constancy is a wonderful
 Mercy to us: But alas! what a Fence is the Act, if the Governours were
 changed? The Protestant Religion as Christian, as opposite to Popery,
 was before the Act was; and would be, if it were revised and changed.
 The most that can be made of the Separations, is, that they are illegal, and
 the aggravated *Schism* illegal. The Differences are originally in the minds
 of Men, and forced out by an Act. From this the *Conformist* and *Non-con-*
formist receive their Denominations. Before this, were Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb,
 Dr. Annesly, Mr. Gouge, and others, *Schismaticks*, any more than the learned
 Dr. Tillotson, or Mr. Nest? They could edifie the Church together, carry
 on the Morning Exercise together, and converse as Brethren. But since a
 new Door and Partition hath been set up, they appear to be as two Fa-
 milies, and two Parties (I doubt not but the Dean's Catholick Head
 and Heart can take them in.) If they hear him not, perhaps they may in-
 cur the angry mark of Separation; if he hear any of them, he may incur
 a Disfavour. Take away the Doors, and Partition-walls, and the House
 is one again. And there are great suspicions that the Surveyors made the
 Doors for Exclusion, and not a large Admission.

1. If you consider; that which was an offensive Innovation to a *Brown-*
rig, *Ward*, *Prideaux*, &c. (*quanti viri!*) is now made Legal, viz. the

H

service

service in *Lane* in the Universities, *Westminster*, *Winchester*, *Eton*, when they please, as was noted before.

2. The *Non-conformists* of old stuck at Subscriptions, *ex animo*, to the Canon; but by this they must subscribe and declare, &c. a sure way to win them!

3. Not only to Articles of Religion (which was enough for a *Conformist* in Queen Elizabeth's days) but all and every thing, &c.

4. Did some think that Bishops and Presbyters were but one Order? Now to keep them out, the Bishop is consecrated in a new Form, to the Office of a Bishop, as a Superiour Order; at least as some conceive.

5. Many had taken the Covenant, which renounced not the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and by virtue of these conjunctly, did adhere to Kingly Government, under the Usurpation, and endeavoured to restore the King. But now that must be renounced (still to help to bring in more) into Conformity, was it not the way? Will they for Peace and Union quit the Directory, and conform to a Liturgy? it shall not bring them in! Would they have the Liturgy amended? They shall not, but in as few things as may be. Can they use the Ceremonies rather than be deprived? they must declare openly as much. Can they practise the old Conformity? They shall renounce the Covenant, by which they were bound to endeavour a Reformation? Would they become Lecturers, as heretofore they might be? No; not except they declare Assent and Consent once a month. If one thing will not keep them out, another shall; if nothing at all will keep them out, then they are hardly trusted without great Evidences, if not Recantations. And who are most gratified and encouraged to come in, but a Man whose Conscience can reach many Miles to two several Diocesses, it may be, from Living to Living? He hath no more to do, but to come within his time, and declare according to Law, and read his Certificate of renouncing, &c. and the Law hath nothing more to require of him, save that where he is Resident, or Incumbent, and hath no Impediment; then indeed he shall read the Service, &c. once a Month, or forfeit five Pounds. If a Man loves his Ease or his Profit, let him conform; all the difficulty is in getting in: If he will, he may do any thing *per alium*, except dye, and give up his Accounts. — When I consider these things, I do not wonder there are so many *Non-conformists*. —

That Honour of his Profession, and our Age, and either the Example, or the Shame of them that shall succeed, Sir *Matthew Hale*, (said to Mr. *Baxter*, on whose word I take it) this Act of Uniformity will never unite and heal us; and did upon occasion draw up a new Bill of Uniformity. His Judgment might as soon be taken as any Mans; and because his Me-

memory.

mory and Manuscripts, are in honour with our late, wise, and great Parliament, I pray God that Bill may not be over-look'd, when that Honourable Assembly shall meet again to debate it.

Here I could stop without the Decency of Conclusion, my running thoughts being put to a stand, and ready to yield to a prevailing Impotency, and grief of Heart.

First, Because so few Heads and Hands were united, and at work, to repair the Breaches of a great Church, which should be every good Man's Prayer and Endeavour.

Secondly, Because the Result of the Debates, and Counsels of, tho but few, yet great, wise, and good Men, should be rejected.

But why should we look for better from those Men, who saw not what they had done amiss, nor repented of other great Evils, which the whole Nation hath seen and felt, when Men's Principles are but as Wheels, moved by Interest, the Interest must be changed, before the Wheels turned backward? Souldiers of Fortune prolong a War, and Counsellors of Fortune prolong Distractions. The Troublers of *Israel*, that put the Horsemen into a disorder, and scotch'd the Wheels of many of our Chariots, were never for the drawing of them into one Body again, and making them serviceable. Some grave and good Men checked the progress of the rest, and at last the best overawed the Guilty, and did gallantly bear up against daring *Rome*: But the Opposition had been the more successful and secure, if they had brought the differing Parties of Protestants into a mutual Trust and Assurance. Blessed be the Men, and blessed be their Memories, and blessed be their Counsels, who have laboured to heal the hurt of the Daughter of *Sion*! and happy they who first arrive at the Haven, tho upon the Planks of a torn and broken Church! The Men of a *Mosaic* Spirit, would have set the contending *Israelites* at one; but our wise Men would not receive a Bill of Union. They who had done the wrong, thrust the Reconcilers away, *q. d.* Who made you Judges? But our Time was not, and is not yet come, altho we have had a great Body, inspired with as great a Soul as ever breathed within those Walls, that saw a like necessity of including Protestants, as of excluding Papists. These see the Things of our Peace, but cannot overtake Peace. *Perfidious Protestants* (so called in the Humble Address, Nov. 29, 1680.) could not find the way of Peace in his Majesty's Restauration, it was as far above them, as Heaven is above the Earth; nor knew how to employ the Sword and Treasure but against Protestants abroad; nor their Power, but upon Protestants at home,

They may read their Character in his Majesty's Proclamation against Debaucheries, 1660. printed, and to be read in Churches.

who helped to restore them to it; nor their Peace, but in Effeminacy, Debaucheries, contempt of God, and the Power of that Religion, which they either contracted into an uneasy corner of a Faction, or else enlarged as far as Rome. They who reared too high a Wall about the Church, have not seen the influence of the Sun upon it, to impregnate it into a desired fruitfulness; the few Plants of a purer kind that spring up in it, look pale and yellow, faint and languid: There is a great noise and sound of Religion, but little Life and Soul! What a brood of Atheists, Papists, Zealous Formalists and Contenders have grown up? Since a Bill of Divorce was issued out to separate able Ministers from their Congregations, an illegitimate Race sprung up, who cry up, Law, Law, and sin against the Confessions and Prayers imposed upon us by it: And the Church, which was the most pregnant Mother of solid and holy Christians of any in the World, after many years travel and pains, sees more of the shape and form, than of the lively Spirit and Strength of true Piety. They who take themselves to be wronged, and the Divorce to be null in it self, have come together, (tho but now and then, and by stealth, for most part, till of late) are liable to the Courts for unlawful Society with their espoused People, have rather multiplied Sorrows, than multiplied Joys. Restore the Prophets their Wives; or if they are dead by Law, give them Licenses to marry where they can; marry the unmarried, and they will, as they do, pray for you; and the Church that is now weak, and sickly, shall be the joyful Mother of Children, born and brought up for God. Take in more Labourers, there is Field-room enough, and the Harvest will be the greater, and so the Joy in Heaven.

To draw to a Conclusion; I will first point out the Obstructors of our Union.

2. Give my Opinion, that the Case of the *Non-conformists*, that are found in Faith, peaceable, and godly, is that which no Man need be ashamed of, or to appear in as an Intercessor.

1. Indeed I am troubled, that there are any such to be found in a Reformed Church, and of all other, in this Church, that oppose or hinder a Coalescence. But all are not *Israel* that are of *Israel*. Many of the Church are for it, and against it: are for it, in its present state of Confinement, and not for it in an Enlargement, which will be really for its Glory and just Authority. What Multitudes are there of these, both High and

and Low? I will pray for them that are above me, and speak of them that are near upon a level with me. I might divide these into Clergy and Laity; I will keep me to the first, because they do influence many of the other. But by the way, I will take up a Remark: It is so come to pass, that our driving and compelling Clergy, have fewer Admirers and Friends than they once had. Many Men, of little or no Religion in Judgment and Heart, could not bear the plain and pressing Preaching of many able Ministers, reputed to be unlearned, because constant and popular Preachers; they could easily part with these, and give rest to their own Ears, by striking them dumb. They were tickled, if not captivated, by the florid and genteel Preaching, and Writings of some (of a more Romantick, than true Majestick and Divine Style) of the Sons of the Church; and therefore say, Let these preach, and the rest keep silence. Some of these kept up the Repute of the Church of *England*, under its Oppression, that lost it in its Exaltation. When their Feathers were grown, and covered with yellow Gold, they spared their Voices, fled from Preferment to Preferment, to gather Gold, but spread not their Wings to hucker and cherish their Brood.

These were the Masters of the Religion of the Courtiers; and many being tired with the Usurpation, gave up their own Reason in complement to Courtiers, for a time, did easily submit to what was determined by our Leaders. And who were they? Church-Papists, as well as Church-Protestants; some of whom were carried beyond their own temper of Moderation; first, to strain hard to practise, what really they adjudged of an evil Tendency, tho of an indifferent Nature, as they thought; and then they were to exact of others, what they could do themselves. The more discerning and obstinate, saw the Journeys end of these Charioteers, and were resolved on their own way: Others that were peaceable and facile, complied, in hopes of the establishment of the King's Declaration, and were held in Parlee, till their Enemies ('tis a sad, but too true a Word) got that Power, as to force them to yield or fly. The Gentleman, understanding the Mystery of the Church-Government was Power, and the Mystery of many Church-mens Zeal, was Church-Dignities, saw that he must Act and Vote, not for the pure Interest of Religion, but the temporal Interest of the Designing Men, began to recoil, and then to look to his own Ground. Many of those rode in Company, but seeing the Company were resolved for *France*, and *Rome*; when they had gone as far as *Canterbury* and *Dover*, and kept pace with them, were resolved to go no further, but to turn back, and break from the Company. The rest of the Church-Conformists, were either the same, or like them that were in be-
fore;

fore; and continued the same painful course in their Ministry, or took cold, became idle, hot, intemperate, and offensive: The first have some respect, the others, no more than they deserve. A new Generation come up with in these eighteen or twenty Years; many of them take the rising Side, Cant some Scraps that fall from their Leaders Mouths; preach as much with their Teeth as with their Tongues; being neither studious, nor considerate, nor modest, but venturers in Censures; they are thought unfit to direct and oversee the Souls of Men. Upon some solemn Times, upon some solemn Days, they Discharge freely, but Aim with an evil Eye, scare away some Birds, but convince no Man of Sin or Duty. The Judicious of all Degrees, spare not to declare their dislike of these Men. In a word, The growth of Popery, and the Antipathy that is kindled against it, by the fiery Designs of Papists, and the Light of Truth; the Moderation of some eminent discerning Church-men, the good Behaviour of Dissenters, the weakness of the Protestant Interest, by our needless Divisions, the sobriety of our Gentry, the unanimity both of them, and the able Country-men, and Citizens, and their Zeal, seeing all at Stake, doth seem to open a way to a desired Union, notwithstanding the averlation of such Opposers as I shall name.

1. A Party of Rigid Imposers, Imposers in Opinion, not yet in Power, that's the best of it; they mightily like the Yoke, Saddle, and Collar of Bells, and the Rack in which we must follow, as the only way. We being Subjects, must not judge, but submit; and they being Judges, weigh to every Man the same Weight; the weakest must bow down to as great a Load as the strongest, whether they can bear it or not; and measure to every Man his *Omer*, whether he can digest it, or not, (if it were all *Manna*, directly from Heaven, a weak Person must strive to swallow it) but yet God, that allowed an *Omer* to every one that could, did not require it of every one that could not, upon pain of turning out, and not coming within five miles of the Family. If *Saul* had been of these Mens Constitution, *David* must not kill *Goliath* like a *Non-conformist*, but go forth with his Armour, his Helmet, and Coat of Mail, and gird on his Sword; but he was so reasonable, that seeing *David* could not go with them, he should go without the Formalities of a Champion. There may be as great disproportion between the understandings of some young unstudied Conformists, and the understandings of great Doctors, as was between *David's* Head, and *Saul's* Head and Helmet; the things required for *Assent*, are much too big for their Capacities: But every *I. A. B.* that is but *S. A.* or a Deacon, must *Assent and Consent, Declare, Abhor*, as perfectly as any *Professor of Divinity*, as positively as if he were an *Arch-Bishop*. They must see

see these things with other Mens Eyes, or must not take the Work upon them, and yet have not the help of a Licensed Comment, upon (as some think) a hard Lesson. I should think, Catechise the Novices well in our Articles, and when they Assent, let them Assent to what they understand, and no more; and if *Consent to the use* be the meaning of the thing, tell them plainly so. I am for a plain and easy way, and as light a Burden as may be laid, that so we may have the more and better Company, and the more comfortable Journey. (Pardon the hastiness of my Pen, in saying, what I am for; Who am I? and the Business is not come to my Voting.)— But these large and intricate Impositions, being equal upon all, Unlearned as well as Learned, do preserve a Notion somewhat like an Implicit Faith: and not *totò Celo*, different from an Infallibility. — But, say they, it is necessary to eradicate bad Principles out of the minds of Men which grew up in the late Times. I demand whether out of the minds of them that are planted with them? (But can my Declaration convert another, and root out ill Principles out of his mind? What if he doth not see the reason of my Opinion?) or out of his minds that never received those pernicious Principles? Yet still I only declare for my self, and if I was never infected with them, there is no danger of my *propagating of them*; let us propagate Godliness and Honesty, and these Principles will never grow up by them. The Principles had been buried in the Church, like Weeds in a new-digg'd Garden, had not our renouncing them kept them in memory.

2. Some poor, low, narrow spirited Men, superstitious and misled, are for this Way, as the only way of Entrance and Continuance in the Churches Service; Spirits so poor that they cannot afford one token of Charity to Dissenters, as if such a Spiritual Alms, would undo them; so low, that having never stood upon the Shoulders of Wisdom and Experience, they see not the Latitude of the way of Heaven; so narrow-hearted, that he thinks there is no room for any in Church-Communion, especially in the Ministry, that will not go into, and stand in a little Frame, like that in which he stands, like an Image. His Charity may extend to the Salvation of Heathens, (a Notion pretty ripe) but not to the Toleration of Christians, especially of Preachers of the common Salvation, if they will not conform. Papists shall sooner enter into the Kingdom of God, than a Presbyterian. And who is the Presbyterian? He may be a Bishop, a Lord, a Parliament-Man, yea a whole Parliament, a Lord Mayor, if but moderate, as well as a preaching moderate *Conformist*. The Moderate of all Qualities, is the Presbyterian; but the Presbyterians are not moderate: No, a Presbyterian is an out-witted Jesuit, and a Jesuit is an overwitting Presbyterian. These new Character-makers are at this Wit: and seeing he would be a
Wit

Wit that makes the Character, I doubt not, but he is for *being* of the greatest sort of Wits, that is, the over-witting Presbyterian. This Piece of Formality makes himself and the Government all one, that must be overthrown, thinks he, if any thing be abated that varies from his Conceptions, Model, and Measure of his Assent. He is not a Papist, something keeps him off; but, good Man, he hath high thoughts of the old Way; every Ceremony is in his Eye, a kind of a hallowed thing; and the Treasure of the Church is wrapped in the Rag of Antiquity, which never was a piece of a Garment in fashion in the Apostles days, or some Centuries after: He contends for the gray Hairs which grow over the Eyes of the Church, and the Nails which have pinched and nipt many tender Skins, as for the Life and Soul of Religion. Many are misled by their Informers, not in Antiquity only, but in Modern Times, even in their own Days, or the days of their immediate Fathers. The Times of War and Usurpation, are the only ill Times in their Chronicles; which were ill indeed, in respect of Punishment and Sin; but have nothing but good to say of the ill Times of Provocation, of Peace, precedeing. They do most partially and untruly charge the War upon the Presbyterians. Much more falsely upon Praying and Preaching; or the Divines that were in the *Parliament* Quarters, and City, many of which were forced thither. It was as truly a *Popish Plot and War*, and, at first, between Prerogative and Liberty, tho not so bare-faced as this horrid Plot. These Men are abused by some of our Deceiving Writers, and know as little of what they declaim against, as they do of the Dissenters of this present Age. But *Andabatarum more pugnant; & clamores (quantos !) excitant.*—It was a bloody Civil War visibly about Civil Matters; it was called *Bellum Episcopale*, not by some Parliament-Men only, but one Bishop, or more; to make the rising Clergy part with their Mony to maintain it; but it was *Bellum Papale pro Rege, contra Regem*, as well as against Parliament and Protestants.

3. Our persecuting Fire-brands, are against Protestant Peace and Union. They approve of persecuting Laws, if they might have a Parliament to make new, and Magistrates to execute the old, and it shall not be Persecution against Dissenting Protestants, but Justice, because it is but the Execution of Laws: and Dissenters must be undone, to preserve the Law and Government. How freely do they exclaim against, and closely gird at our last Parliament? fly upon our Blessed Reformation from Popery; blemish it with Aspersions of Sedition and Rebellion (an Affront to Religion not to be endured.) [If they read no more than Dr. *Du Moulin*, Pr. of *Canterbury's* Answer to *Philanax Anglican*, they will be more just to the Reformation.] These Men are so well prepared for a Popish Successor, that they can trust God with their Religion, tho in Popish Hands, (And cannot they trust themselves too?) but cannot

not

not trust a Non-conforming Protestant, with preaching a Sermon, or Praying, not in an open Pulpit. These blow up Controversies into unquenchable Dissentions, into large Differences, into wide Chasms, and unpassable Gulfs. They condemn the Magistrate for Coldness, if he let a Dissenter preach, or leave him a Bed to lie upon. The Ejected are like Suburbs, without the Walls of Uniformity, burn the Suburbs to save the Church within; whereas one would think it were the safer way, to build a Wall about the Suburbs, and bring them within the Line. They hate House-preaching, and running into Corners, and would bring out the Non-conformists into the Sun-shine but only in the Dog-days. *Caniculam Persecutionis video*. Tertull. *Parce Civibus Miles*, is Heathen Latine; but *Occide & manduca*, is in the Original.

It was a severe word of King James; *If this be all* (quoth he) *which they have to say*, (meaning our famous Dr. Jo. Rainolds, and the other Divines, called Non-conformists) *I shall make them Conform themselves, or I will hurry them out of this Land, or else do worse*. [Conference at Hampton-Court, p. 85.] It is as likely that they know not what a Spirit they are of, that are for hurrying good Men, as it was from a Spirit of Flattery, that a Lord said, He was perswaded the King spoke in that Conference by the Holy Ghost. How well soever he spake in some parts of it, yet that saying might have been spared.

4. Idle and insufficient Ministers, that live at ease, and as the manner of speaking is, enjoy themselves, that are more Abroad than at Home, and as seldom in their Studies, as they are in their Pulpits, are indisposed to a Closure. These Conform perhaps above Conformity sometimes, whose Surplices are as Cloaks for their Faults; and their pretended Loyalty makes them impregnable against deserved Censures. Many of these consort with Companions of a Feather, inflame one another into a degree of madness. These drive away their People, and when they are gone, throw after them, and revile those that entertain them better. These, with all their Might, cry, the Church, the Church; declaim against much preaching, (and is not that a good way to save their pains, by calling it needless?) We are not now to convert Heathens, (they would rather confirm than convert them) much preaching hath spoiled the World; I hate these Presbyterians, nothing will serve them but Preaching; cry out against Calvin, the Parliament, the Fanatics, and run over their Railery, as Papists do their Beads. These are afraid of admission of more good Preachers, that their Manners will be inspected, and their Churches quite deserted; that they must take more and better pains, or else be exposed.

5. Ecclesiastical Merchants, *Ecclesiae Possessive Filii*, are against admission of more to the exercise of the Sacred Function. The Trade hath been in

some great Mens Hands, and the engrossing of the Commodities of the Church, hath enriched many, that never would have touched the Burden with one of their Fingers, but for double Wages. But if more Ministers are incapacitated by Law, the Endowments of the Church will be distributed into more hands. These turn Prophets, that the Church will fall, when due Encouragements are taken away from Learned Men, in which Rank they place themselves; *q. d.* Take away Pluralities, you discourage Learning; whereas it is too well known to both our Universities, that they are a discouragement to Learning, that many are not rewarded with a Plurality, for their double Portion of Learning; and that the Learning of the Curat, is as much the Ornament and Support of the Church as theirs, many of whose Absence is as profitable to their Parishes, (except to the poor, who have no Alms at their Doors, nor relief from the Parsonage) as their Presence. These are potent in their Patrons, Friends, and Relations, and may obstruct the Work, when things come to the Vote, and Flesh and Blood pleads Reason against the true Interest of Religion, and the crying Necessity of Souls. But let them not fear, for there is no danger of putting them out, to bring others in; Nor do the *Non-conformists* desire their Liberty with the deprivation of any now in possession.

6. Some honest and good Men are afraid of an Alteration from a mistaken Case. Many ran into Conformity to be out of Confusion, and are now tenacious of this Conformity, for fear of a Toleration of Popery, and Antichristian Sects. But there are Mediums between Extreams. They argue in their haste, from the Necessity of a Church Government, against an abatement of Rigor, as if the sodering of Parties, would be a throwing of all into the Fire, and the running of the whole into a shapeless and formless Lump. Many are boldly imposed upon into an ill Opinion of our Parliament, and composing Minds, as if they designed a Dissolution of Government; and indeed do, by their causeless Fears, discover the ill temper of our Cement, that if you do but touch our present Church-Frame, it will be in danger of falling.

7. Some are warped from a Closure, by the influence of Self-love: They have Conformed, and are afraid of an after-condemnation for Conformity, and that the *Non-conformists* will come in as Victors, and be puffed up into an ostentation of their Refusal and Sufferings upon better Grounds and Principles. But Brotherly-love and Self-denial, which are so essential to Christianity, must be our Exercise, carrying on the common Salvation with one Heart and Shoulder.—But these two last named, will not be grieved at our Union, when it appears to be good.

Lastly,

Lastly: Our many Breaches with God, is the great Gulf between; On the one Hand, if Church-men would lay to Heart, and mourn for our Divisions, and clearly see whence they arise, and the great Loss to the Church at home, and Scandal to the Churches abroad, by the Ejection of so many able good Men, whom no other Nation could spare, and turn the Heat of Disputation into Love and Compassion, and spare themselves by not disgracing others, we might have more hopes. That Doctor (I conceal his Name, for he is fallen asleep) who saw *London-fire*, and was deeply affected with it, who after his return to his Place in the Country on the Fast following, reckoned this among the many Sins, and Judgments and Provocations of the Land, that many able Ministers were turned out of the Ministry, was in a right temper for a Solemn Fast, but was chidden and rated into Tears for his melting Charity, by his angry Diocesan. On the other Hand, when dissenting Christians, or Auditors, bring forth more Fruit under the unwearied Labours of their Preachers, and obey the Gospel of Christ, and can bless God for the many able publick Preachers, and receive the Faith and Word, without respect of Persons; and be sorry for their Anger and Evil-speaking, we may come to an Union, and see the Partition-Wall thrown down.

But surely our Legislators are too wise, and more resolved upon the most necessary Work of composing Differences, than to endanger the Whole by a division of Parts; to gratify these, I have named who are not of so much worth, as to compensate the loss of publick Church-Protestant-Peace for their sakes. —

2. The Case and Qualifications of the *Non-conformists*, is such, as no good Man of any Spirit should be afraid to own, by way of Intercession, or Solicitation for their Re-admission.

1. Those few that are yet alive, who were Men before the War, are as safe under the Healing Wings of the Act of Grace, as any other Men who needed that Protection as much as they, and have been placed as near the King and Court, as they have been driven from him. The greater is their Transgression, who peck at that Foundation of our Peace, and that tear that Covering from their Neighbours backs, in their Pulpits and Pamphlets.

2. They need no more Clemency, nor Pardons, since, than other Men; except for their Preaching.

3. They are admitted into the private Converse of the most eminent of all Qualities in the Land, except a few. Who can say of any of them, with such an one, no not to Eat? Therefore they are admittable into a publick Station, where they can do more good, and less hurt, if doing hurt were their Design and Faculty, than in private. Me-thinks no

Man should be permitted to preach to five, and from five to five, from House to House, that may not be permitted to preach publicly : For may they with Safety, and Edification to Souls, preach to five at a time, why not to five hundred at a time ? Or if their preaching in publick be dangerous to the State and Church, is it not much more in private ? Our Priests and Jesuites have not perverted their boasted of Numbers in publick, but in private. Families are the Nurseries of Church and State ; corrupt them, and the Poison is dispersed. Me-thinks it should not be at all lawful for *Non-conformists*, to preach to a number not exceeding five at once, or as lawful to preach in publick ; where if they were a Depraving Heretical Sect of Men (which they are not) but to be preferred before thousands that Officiate in the Land, they will be more wary and temperate, than to lose their Hearers, or hazard their Liberty, which they obtain with so much difficulty. Suppose twenty *Non-conforming Ministers* should keep strictly to their legal number of five ; these twenty Ministers preach to a hundred Citizens ; if these twenty should Lecture the hundred into Atheism, Blasphemy, Infidelity, Heresy, Sedition or Rebellion, would it be endured ? would not the Pestilence spread ? And that of the Mind is as quickly diffused, and as silently conveyed, as the *Plague* from Body to Body, and House to House. If they are Men of pernicious Principles, they are allowed too much ; if not, they are allowed too little. It is true, they have taken Liberty contrary to Law, to preach to greater Numbers, and have patiently born the Penalties, when inflicted : And by their adventuring, they have vindicated themselves, and testified to the Gospel which they believe, and stop'd the Mouths of many ; besides much good done upon many thousand Souls, that had been else neglected ; and declared to the World what manner of Men they are, what Doctrine they preach, and that they have not sowed Sedition, and ill Principles of Disloyalty and Treason : And the many years experience, and proof given of their Principles and Abilities, is not only an Apology for them, against them that judg them, *vel prejudicio hominis*, but furnish the Wise and Moderate with some Arguments to plead for reasonable Abatements for them.

4. They have done as much as any Men of their Degrees, to support and save the Nation, and the Protestant Profession, and as great a Terror to the Papists, as any of their number and quality in the Land : And I believe, if they thought that either Popery, or any Antichristian Sects should enter in by them, tho they cannot conform to keep them out, by that, they would ask leave to remove into other Nations, rather than be a Door to let in Miseries upon their own.

5. They

5. They are Men of great Parts, Piety, and Prudence; sound Divines, good Preachers and Writers; no Man that knows their Persons, or their Labours, or their Writings, but ought to give them their due, without distraction from others. With what a sweet Spirit and Style, Learning, Judgment, Argument, hath Mr. *Polebill* vindicated them, and the Doctrines of the Church, against Dr. *Sherlock's* Imputations?

6. Wise and great Men for Power, Place, Wisdom, and Experience in Affairs, both of Church and State, have endeavoured a Composition, though in vain: I should not be ashamed or afraid, to my best ability, to commend the Endeavours of but one Lord Keeper *Bridgman*; of but one Lord Chief Justice *Hales* (What would we have given for him since his Death?) of but one Bishop *Wilkins*, or either of the Deans of *Canterbury* and *Pauls*. But I have shewed how some of the sharpest Procurors of our Laws grew mild and gentle. But beside those venerable Persons, the Right Reverend Bishops, *Reynolds*, *Gawden*, were tenderly affected, as was Bishop *Earle*; and as the now most learned Bishop of *Chester*, as I have it from a good hand, the Bishop of *Hereford*, beside others, more than I can or will name, of eminent worth in the Church of *England*. And surely, rigor, and suppression of so sound a number of Ministers, doth neither become Men, as Wise, Experienced, Self-searchers, Charitable; or to descend below a Christian, it is not humane nor genteel. The more wise, experienced, self acquainted, Christian, or genteel any Man is, the more moderate in Ceremonies, different Rites, and Impositions. [See the close of these Sheets.]

7. I never heard any Wise, Learned, good Man of the Church of *England*, justify their Ejection, nor approve of their Suppression; some have wished they would give way to the Wrath of angry Magistrates, either by abstaining from publick Preaching, or in time of Publick, that they might escape the edge of the Law.

8. It is no more to their prejudice that they are not all of the same mind, than that we are not all of a mind, no not in the point of Conformity it self.

9. To intercede for them, and their admission, is not to plead for turbulent, factious, schismatical Persons, that are insufferable. Make them one with us by a Law, and where is the Faction, and Schism? Suppose the King and Parliament for them, and against us; their way made legal, and ours as it is, only by a voluntary Profession, as tied up to it in Conscience, but without or against the Law; on whom would the charge of Schism fall? The Magistrates Favour and Law removes, or lessens the Crime. I know there is a Schism, and it is a great Sin, without respect to humane Laws; but he that endeavours to keep the Unity of
the

the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, is no Schismatick, altho he cannot come up to the Terms of Conformity. I have a tenderness in imputing Schism to any good Men, who cannot live and dye in Sin; but if this be a sin, many good Men have died in it, never declaring their Repentance for their Non-conformity, or Preaching against the Prohibition of the Law. I do verily believe they were not only seemingly, but sincerely good Men; 'tis too hard to judge them dead in Sin.

10. They are Protestants; if they come not to that Test, reject them; they are peaceable, they are loyal, are true to the King according to Law, they have born their burden with us. Do we pray for the King, so do they, and for all that are in Authority. that under them they may lead peaceable and quiet Lives in all Godliness and Honesty? Do we Fast? they do the same, with great importunity. Who more abundant in Labours than they? Who more Orthodox according to the Doctrines of the Church than they? — My Paper is almost at an end, and so am I.

Thus I have communicated my Thoughts with great plainness and truth. I shall say what was once spoken in Parliament; 'Let us first fear God, then shall we honour the King the more, for I am afraid we have been less prosperous in Parliaments, because we have preferred other Matters before him. Let Religion be our *Primum Querite*, for all things else are 'but *Et cetera's* to it, &c. [Sir Ben. Rudy.r.]

And whether Exclusion of Papists, or Inclusion of Protestants be first endeavoured, is left to the Wisdom of my Superiors. — God prosper both.

For my Brethren and Companion's sake, I will now pray; *Peace be upon Israel.*

Violentis Conciliis, nec sanari mentes, nec tranquillitas Ecclesie restitui unquam poterit. [Phil. Melanch. ad Hen. 2. Fran. Reg.]

Quod si squame Leviathan ita cobareat, ut earum opere textili densato, quasi Loricatus incedat Satan & Cataphractus, quod de fœdere Concordiæ, quâ malignantis Ecclesie Membra, se complexa, muniant & circumvallent, Elegantissime Lutherus & verè, cur immane quantum bient, obsecro, quasi ruinam Universe Fabricæ minitantes, inbientq; quasi vasto fœdog, ritu se devoraturi, vivi Lapides in vero Templo Collocati, &c. — inquit Dr. Stoughton. Epistola Elegantiss. cui Titulus, Felicitus ultimi Sæculi. p. 40.

Addenda.

I Will fill up these Sheets with some Royal Condescensions, and Episcopal Pleas, (besides those mentioned before) which I humbly entreat those in Authority, especially my Lords the Bishops, seriously to consider, in behalf of the *Non-conformists*, which may be found in his Majesty's Speeches and Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, and some of the Bishops (and others) own writings. And first observe what his present Majesty says concerning the *Non-conformists*, &c.

In his Declaration of Ecclesiastical Affairs, *Octob. 25. 1660.* ' When We were in *Holland*, (says he) We were attended by many Grave and Learned Ministers from hence, who were looked upon as most able and principall Assertors of the Presbyterian Opinions, with whom We had as much Conference, as the multitude of Affairs, which were then upon Us, would permit Us to have ; and to Our great Satisfaction and Comfort, found them Persons full of Affection to Us, of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, and neither Enemies (as they have been given out to be) to Episcopacy or Liturgy, but mostly to desire such Alterations in either, as without shaking Foundations, might allay the present Distempers, which the Indisposition of the Time, and tenderness of some Mens Consciences had contracted. —

And concerning Ceremonies, *pag. 6.* he says, ' Now We do not think that Reverence We have for the *Church of England* in the least degree diminished by our Condescensions, not peremptorily to insist on some particulars of Ceremonies; which how-ever introduced by the Piety and Devotion, and order of former Times, may not be so agreeable to the present, but may even lessen that Piety and Devotion; for the improvement whereof, they might happily be first introduced, and consequently may well be *dispensed with*; and we hope this charitable Compliance of Ours, will dispose the minds of all Men to a chearful submission to that Authority, the preservation whereof is so necessary for the Unity and Peace of the Church; and that they will believe the support of the

' Episcopal

‘Episcopal Authority, to be the the best support of Religion, by being the
 ‘means to contain the minds of Men within the Rules of Government.
 And pag. 16.—‘And therefore Our present Consideration and Work is,
 ‘so gratify the private Consciences of those who are grieved with the use
 ‘of some Ceremonies, by indulging to, and dispensing with, their omit-
 ‘ting those Ceremonies.—

And pag. 7, 8.—‘As for what concerns the Penalties upon those who
 ‘(living peaceably) do not conform thereunto, (viz. the Act of Uni-
 ‘formity) through scruple and tenderness of Conscience, but modestly
 ‘without scandal perform their Devotions in their own way. We shall
 ‘make it our special Care, so far forth as in us lies, without invading the
 ‘freedom of Parliament, to incline their Wisdom— to concur with Us
 ‘in the making some such Act for that purpose, as may enable Us to exer-
 ‘cise with a more universal Satisfaction.— That Power of Dispensing
 ‘which We conceive to be inherent in Us: Nor can We doubt of their
 ‘chearful cooperating with us in a thing wherein we do conceive our selves
 ‘so far engaged in Honour, and in what we owe to the Peace of our Do-
 ‘minions; which We profess We can never think secure, whilst there
 ‘shall be a colour left to the Malicious and Disaffected, to inflame the
 ‘minds of so many Multitudes upon the score of Conscience, with despair
 ‘of ever obtaining any effect of our Promises for their Ease.

And in his Speech to both Houses of Parliament, Feb. 10. 1667, saith
 He,—‘One thing more I hold my Self obliged to recommend unto you
 ‘at this present; which is, That you would seriously think of some course
 ‘to beget a better Union and Composure in the minds of my Protestant
 ‘Subjects, in Matters of Religion; whereby they may be induced, not
 ‘only to submit quietly to the Government, but also chearfully give their
 ‘assistance to the support of it.

And in his Speech to both Houses, Nov. 9. 1678. He saith ‘I meet you
 ‘here with the most earnest desire that Man can have, to unite the minds of
 ‘all my Subjects, both to Me, and to one another; and I resolve it shall be
 ‘your Fault, if the Success be not suitable to my Desires.—Beside, that end
 ‘of Union which I aim at, (and which I wish could be extended to Pro-
 ‘testants Abroad, as well as at Home) I purpose by this last step I have
 ‘made, to discern whether the Protestant Religion, and the Peace of the
 ‘Kingdom, be as truly aimed at by others, as they are really intended by me.—

Some Bishops (and other Eminent Divines of the Church of Eng-
 land) formerly, and of late, have most pathetically pleaded the Case
 of the Non-conformists, whose Apostolical Zeal and Charity are worthy
 the Consideration and Imitation of the present Bishops and Fathers of our
 Church at this Time especially. A former Bishop of St. Davids, in the
 Convocation

Convocation-House, May 23. 1604.—speaking of those who were scrupulous only upon some Ceremonies, &c. 'Being otherwise Learned, studious, grave, and honest Men, whose Labours have been painful in the Church and profitable to their several Congregations, (he says) tho I do not justify their Doings, yet surely their Service would be missed at such a Time, as need shall require them and us to give the right hand of Fellowship one to another, and to go Arm in Arm against the common Adversary, that so there might be *Via unita fortior*.—If these our Brethren aforesaid should be deprived of their Places, for the Matters premised, I think we should find cause to bend our Wits to the uttermost extent of our skill to provide some Cure of Souls for them, where they may exercise their Talents.—— Further, if these Men, being divers hundreds, (as it is bruted abroad) should forsake their Charges, (as some do presuppose they will) who, I pray you, should succeed them? — Besides this, for so much as in the Life-time of the late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, these things were not so extreemly urged, but that many Learned Preachers enjoyed their Liberty herein, conditionally that they did not by Word or Deed openly disgrace or disturb the State established; I would know a Reason, why it should not be so generally and exceeding strictly called upon, especially considering these Men are now the more necessary, by so much as we see greater encrease of Papists to be now of late, than were before. To conclude, I wish, that if by Petition made to the King's Majesty, there cannot be obtained a quite remove of the Premises, which seem so grievous to divers, nor yet a Toleration for them which be of the more staid and temperate carriage, yet at the least, there might be procured a mitigation of the Penalty, if they cannot be drawn by other Reasons to a Conformity with us. Thus far this Bishop in those days, when the Terms of Conformity were not so hard.

Bishop Davenant on Col. 2. 20. speaks largely concerning Rites and Ceremonies, the Sum is this, 'If you be free from the Rites that God did prescribe, then are you free from the Traditions of Men; it is a most wicked thing they should impose this Yoke upon you, and you are most foolish to submit your Necks to it, for God would not have abolished the Ceremonial Law instituted by himself, that a New one may be invented by Men.

Hoc jam supponitur, quia supra probatum fuit liberati sunt a Servitute Rituum & Dogmatum humanorum, hoc colligitur, & infertur ex priore Liberatione, &c. Davenant in col. p. 310.

Indeed he would have Ceremonies for Decency and Order, but this is not the State of the Question; for that which pinches the Non-conformist is (as the Preface to the Liturgy tells) that *The Ceremonies that are retained are not dark and dumb Ceremonies, but are set forth, that every Man may understand what they mean, and to what they serve, and such as are apt to stir up the*

dull mind of Man to the remembrance of his Duty to God, by some notable and special Signification, whereby he might be edified. By which words they judge they are imposed as sacramental, and so they conceive them unlawful.

Dr. Taylor, late Bishop of Down and Connor (whose Writings are in great Esteem, even with those that are most zealous for Ceremonies) hath several Passages in his *Cases of Conscience*, that seem to favour and justify some of the Non-conformist's Principles, viz. Pag. 303. ' Ecclesiastical Laws are made relative to Time and Place, to Persons and Occasions, ' *subject to all Changes*, fitted for use and the Advantage of the Churches, ' ministering to Edification, and complying with Charity: Whatsoever ' Ecclesiastical Law hath not these Conditions, *the Churches ought not to receive*, because they are Impediments, not Advantages to the Service of God; if they be thus qualified, no good Man will refuse them; if they be not, they are *Laws of Tyrants*, not of spiritual Fathers, *Rule 20. pag. 323.* ' Ecclesiastical Laws must ever promote the Service of God and the Good of ' *Souls*, but must never put a Snare or Stumbling-block to Consciences, — ' the Authority which the Lord hath given, is for *Edification and not for Destruction*, 2 Cor. 10. 8. & 13. 10. Pag. 314 Ceremonies oblige no longer ' than they minister to the end of Charity. And pag. 325, — Tho significant Ceremonies can be for Edification to the Church in some Degree, ' and in some Persons, yet it's to be considered whether the introducing ' of such things, doth not destroy the Church, not only in her *Christian Liberty*, but in the *Simplicity*, and *Purity*, and *Spirituality* of her Religion, by insensible changing it into *Ceremonial and External Service*, *ibid.* — ' A Symbolical Rite of humane Invention, to signify what it does not ' effect, and then introduced into the *solemn Service of God*, is so like those ' Vain Imaginations and Representations forbidden in the second Commandment, that the very *Suspicion* is more against *Edification*, than their ' Use can pretend to.

A Conformist of great Note told a Captain under his Majesty, that he was glad so many Ministers refused to conform; the Captain would know his Reason, he gives it thus: *Had all Ministers conformed, People would have thought there was nothing in Religion; only a thing to talk of in the Pulpit, and serve a State design, for these Ministers will turn any way the State turns: but by their giving up their Livings, and exposing Themselves and Families to outward Evils, rather than they would conform to things imposed not agreeable (as they apprehend) to the Gospel they preached, they have convinced Men there is a reality in Religion, and given a Check to Atheism.*

Scholast. and pract. Divin. Pt. 2d p. 93, 94.

Mr. Jeans, a great School-man and Conformist in former Times, who censured the Non-conformists as sharply as any, and wrote against them, while he had read but one side, as he saith, and was

was a Stranget to what the *Non-conformists* could say for themselves, their Adversaries representing their Objections and Answers so weak, and ridiculous (as too many among us do now) hath left upon Record these Words, viz. When the Parliament began, he intended to write a full Vindication of the Discipline and Ceremonies of the Church of England, to which end he read all such *Non-conformists* Books as he could procure; upon the Perusal of them, says he, 'I soon found their Adversaries most disingenuously misrepresented all that they said; and that they refused to joyn Issue with them in the State of the Question; that they came not up to an ordinary Grapple with them with their Arguments; and that they seldom regularly replied unto the Solutions which were given to their Objections; and this (says he) quickly produced an Alteration in my Judgment, and I believe it will do so too in all that will make such an impartial Search into the matter as I have done.

This is the ingenuous Confession of that Learned Man, making excuse for what he had written against the *Non-conformists*.

If we consider what is our Defence against the Common Enemy, we may find what may be our Cement among our selves; the Reverend Dean of St. Paul's in his *Rational Account*, p. 53. hath excellently demonstrated, viz. That the Union of the Catholick Church depends upon the Agreement of it, in making the Foundation of its Being to be the grounds of its Communion; for the Unity being intended to preserve the Being, there can be no Reason given why the bonds of Union should extend beyond the Foundation of its Being, which is the owning things necessary to the Salvation of all, from whence it necessarily follows that whatsoever Church imposeth the belief of other Things as necessary to Salvation, which were not so antecedently necessary to the Being of the Catholick Church, doth as much as in it lies break the Unity of it. And those Churches who do desire to preserve its Unity are bound thereby not to have Communion with it so long as it doth so. These things premised, saith he, We shall thereby find what the necessary Conditions of Ecclesiastical Communion are, and consequently where the proper Cause of Schism lies in transgressing those Bounds, and what Foundations may be laid for the Peace of the Christian World.

Which agrees with his *Irenic*, p. 122. 'Certainly the Primitive Church, that did not charge Mens Faith with such a load of Articles, as now in these latter Ages Men are charged with, would much less burthen Men, with imposing doubtful Practices upon them, as the ground of Church-Communion.

Irenic p. 119, 120. — 'Let Men turn and wind themselves which way they will, by the very same Arguments that any will prove Separation from the Church of Rome lawful, because she required unlawful Things

as Conditions of her Communion, it will be proved lawful, ~~is~~ Not to conform to any suspected, or unlawful Practice required by any Church-Governour upon the same Terms, if the thing so required be after serious and sober Enquiry, judged unwarrantable by a Man's own Conscience. And with all it would be further considered, whether, when our best Writers do lay the Imputation of Schism, not on those that withdraw Communion, but on them for requiring such Conditions of Communion (whereby they did rather eject Men out of their Communion, than the others separate from them) they do not by the same Argument, lay the Imputation of Schism on all who require such Conditions of Communion, and take it wholly off from those who refuse to conform for Conscience sake? And the Learned Haler says, *Miscelan* p. 218. 'Whereforever false or suspected Opinions are made a piece of the Church Liturgy, he that separates is not the Schismatick.'

A. B. Lund against Fisher (as quoted by Dr. Stillingfleet in his *Rational Account*, p. 324.) 'Tis too true, (says he) indeed, that there is a miserable Rent in the Church, and I make no question but the best Men do most bemoan it; nor is he a Christian, that would not have Unity, might he have it with Truth. But, I never said or thought, that the Protestants made this Rent, the Cause of Schism is yours; for You thrust Us from You, because we called for Truth, and Redress of Abuses. For a Schism must needs be theirs, whose the Cause of it is: The Wo runs full out of the mouth of Christ even against him that gives the Offence; not against him that takes it ever.'

Chillingworth's (*Safe Way*, p. 197.) hath excellent Expressions worthy to be noted, viz. He that would assert Christians to that Liberty which Christ and his Apostles left them, must needs do Truth a most Heroical Service. And seeing the over-valuing of the Differences among Christians, is one of the greatest Main-tainers of the Schism of Christians, *Sec.* p. 198. certainly if Protestants be faulty in this Matter (of playing the Pope.) it is for doing it too much, and not too little. — Take away these Walls of Separation, and all will be quickly one. Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of Men, for not subscribing to the Words of Men, as the Words of God (N. B.) require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no Man Master but him only: let those leave claiming of Infallibility, that have no Title to it, and let them that in their Words, disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their Actions. In a Word, Take away Tyranny, which is the Devils Instrument to support Errors, and Superstitions and Impieties; I say, take away Tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full Liberty of captivating their Understandings to Scripture only; and as Rivers, when they have a free Passage, run all to the Ocean: So it may well be hoped, by God's Blessing, that universal Liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to Truth and Unity.

I hope, my Lords the Bishops will regard the Advice of the Famous and Learned

Learned Mounſieur Claude in his Letter to the Biſhop of London (adjoyned to Dr. ſtillingſſee's late Book) viz.

I hope you will not be wanting in the Duty of Charity, and the Spirit of Peace, and that when the Diſpute ſhall be only of ſome Temperaments, or ſome Ceremonies that are a Stumbling-block (N. B.) and which in themſelves are nothing in Compariſon of an entire Re-union of your Church, under your holy Miniſtry, you will make it ſeen that You love the Sponſe of your Maſter more than your ſelves, and that it is not ſo much from your Greatneſs and your Eccleſiaſtical Dignity, that you deſire to receive your Glory and your Joy, as from your Paſtoral Vertues, and the ardent Care you take of your Flocks.

The preſent Lord Biſhop of Hereford, in his *Naked Truth*, with hearty Compaſſion and Zeal, pleads the Caſe of our preſent Non-conformiſts, both with the (then) two Houſes of Parliament, and the Biſhops in particular. — Firſt, In his Addreſs to the Lords and Commons in general, he thus expreſſes himſelf: ‘ My Lords and Noble Gentlemen, you have fully expreſſed your Zeal to God, and his Church, in making Laws for Unity, &c. I call God, the ſearcher of all Hearts, the God of Life and Death, to witneſs, That I would moſt readily, yea, moſt joyfully Sacrifice all I have in this World, my Life and All, that all Non-conformiſts were reduced to our Church; but it falls out moſt ſadly, that your Laws have not the deſired effect, our Church is more and more divided, &c. — And concludes with earneſt Prayers, ‘ That God would direct them to that which may make for the Unity of our Church, by yielding to weak Ones, &c. —

And in pag. 10. (Edition in Folio) he thus earneſtly and ſeriouſly Addreſſes himſelf to the Biſhops; ‘ My Reverend Fathers and Judges of the Church, I (with St. Paul, Col. 3.) beſeech you put on fatherly bowels of Mercy, Kindneſs, humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering towards your poor weak Children; and ſo long as they hold faſt the Body of Chriſt, be not ſo rigorous with them for Shadows; if they ſubmit to you in Subſtance, have patience, tho they do not ſubmit in Ceremonies: and give me leave to tell you my poor Opinion: This violent preſſing of Ceremonies hath (I humbly conceive) been a great hinderance from embracing them: Men fearing your Intentions to be far worſe than really they are, and therefore abhor them. —

And pag. 11. — ‘ This force-urging Uniformity in Worſhip, hath cauſed great diviſion in Faith, as well as Charity; for had you, by abolishing
‘ ſome

This is the Judgment of the Non conformiſts, viz. That is only pleaſing to God, which is commanded by God, and that which is moſt pleaſible and venerable, according to humane Opinion, if not commanded by God, is moſt vile and impious; accordingly, ſome Reverend Prelate ſums up all, (in his Epiſtle to a Friend concerning Popery) in theſe Words: I will in the Worſhip of God do only that, which his Will tells me is acceptable to his Divine Goodneſs. (21. NOV. 1712)

' some Ceremonies, taken the weak Brethren into your Church, they had
 ' not wandred about after seducing Teachers, nor fallen into so many gross
 ' Opinions of their own. — Now I beseech you, in the fear of God, set
 ' before your Eyes the dreadful Day of Judgment, when Christ in his Tri-
 ' bunal of Justice shall require an account of every Word and Deed, and
 ' shall thus question you: Here are several Souls, who taking offence at
 ' your Ceremonies, have forsaken my Church, have forsaken the Faith, have
 ' run into Hell, the Souls for which I shed my precious Blood? Why have
 ' you suffered this? Nay, why have you occasioned this? Will you Answer,
 ' It was to preserve *our* Ceremonies? Will not Christ return unto you, Aye
 ' your Ceremonies more dear unto you than the Souls for which I died? Who
 ' hath required these things at your Hands? Will you, for Ceremonies,
 ' which you your selves confess to be indifferent, no way necessary unto Sal-
 ' vation, suffer your weak Brethren to perish, for whom I died? Have not
 ' I shewed you how *David and his Souldiers were guiltless in eating the Shew-*
 ' *bread, which was not lawful but only for the Priest to eat?* If David dispen-
 ' sed with a Ceremony commanded by God, to satisfy the hunger of his
 ' People, Will not you dispence with *your own* Ceremonies to satisfy the
 ' Souls of my People, who are called by my Name, and profess my Name,
 ' tho in weakness? Or will you tell Christ, they ought to suffer for their
 ' own wilfulness and perverseness, who will not submit to the Laws of
 ' the Church as they ought? Will not Christ return, Shall they perish for
 ' transgressing *your* humane Laws, which they ignorantly conclude Errone-
 ' ous, And shall not you perish for transgressing my Divine Laws, which
 ' you know to be Good and Holy? Had I mercy on you, and should not
 ' you have mercy on your fellow Servants? With the same measure you
 ' meted, it shall be measured unto you again: I tremble to go farther,
 ' but most humbly beseech you, for Christ's sake, endeavour to regain these
 ' strayed Sheep, for which he shed his precious Blood, and think it as great
 ' an advantage, as great an Honour to you, as it was to St. Paul, to become
 ' all things to all Men, that you may gain some, as doubtless you will ma-
 ' ny, tho not all; and the few standers off will be the more convinced,
 ' and at long running wearied out and gained also.

I close this Bishop's earnest Requests, with one of the Prayers made by
 the Bishops, for the late Fast on Decemb. 22. 1680. appointed by the King's
 Proclamation, (among other ends) to unite the Hearts of all Loyal Pro-
 testants, (with which I hope my Lords the Bishops will join their sincere
 endeavours,) Viz.

For

For Union among our Selves.

Blessed Jesu, our Saviour, and our Peace; who didst shed thy precious Blood upon the Cross, that thou might'st abolish, and destroy all Enmity among Men, and reconcile them in one Body unto God: Look down in much pity and compassion upon this distressed Church, and Nation; who's bleeding Wounds, occasion'd by the lamentable Divisions that are among us, cry aloud for thy speedy Help, and saving Relief. Stir up, we beseech thee, every Soul of us, carefully (as becomes sincere Christians) to root out of our Hearts all Pride, and Vain-glory, all Wrath and Bitterness, all unjust Prejudice and causeless Jealousy, all Hatred and Malice, and desire of Revenge, and whatsoever it is, that may any way exasperate our Minds, or hinder us from discerning the things that belong unto our Peace: And by the Power of thy Holy Spirit of Peace, dispose all our Hearts to such meekness of Wisdom, and lowliness of Mind, such calm and deliberate Long-suffering, and Forbearance of one another in Love, with such due esteem of those, whom thou hast set over us to watch for our Souls, as may turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Hearts of the Children to the Fathers; that so we may become a ready People, prepar'd to live in Peace, and the God of Peace may be with us. To this End, give us all Grace, O Lord, seriously to lay to Heart, not only the great Dangers we are in at present by these unhappy Divisions, but also the great Obligations to this godly Union, and Concord, which lie upon us: That as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, and Father of all; so we may henceforth be all of one Heart, and of one Soul, closely united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity; and may with one Mind, and one Mouth glorify thee, O Lord, the Prince of Peace, who with thy blessed Father, in the Unity of the Holy Spirit, livest, and reignest ever one God World without end. Amen.

F I N I S.

